shrI Ve~NkaTesha suprabhAtam

shrI Ve~NkaTesha suprabhAtam, composed by shrI PrativAdi bhayankaram ANNan svAmi is one of the most popular morning prayer songs. This beautifully rhyming stotra is similar to toNDaraDipoDi AzhvAr's tiruppaLLiyezhucci, and shrI ANDAL's tiruppAvai, in awakening the Lord.

In this stotra, the first verse is taken out from shrImat VAlmIki rAmAyaNam, where VishvAmitra R^iShi is awakening **KausalyA supraja**, that is Lord shrI rAmacandra mUrti. The rest of the twenty eight verses were composed by ANNan svAmi. In the second verse, Lord Govinda is awakened.

shrI mahAlakShmI is being awakened in the next two verses and this article summarizes the inner meanings of the 3rd verse of shrI Ve~NkaTesha suprabhAtam.

मातस्समस्तजगतां मधुकैटभारेः

वक्षोविहारिणि मनोहर दिव्यमूर्ते।

श्रीस्वामिनि स्रितजनप्रियदानशीले

श्रीवेङ्कटेशदयिते तव सुप्रभातम् ।।

mAtassamastajagatAM madhukaiTabhAreH
vakShovihAriNi manohara divyamUrte! |
shrIsvAmini! sritajanapriyadAnashIle
shrIve~NkaTeshadayite tava suprabhAtam ||(3)

Though the word '**mAtaH**' generally means mother, here, it is not any ordinary mother, but particularly refers to shrI mahAlakShmI. How does the word **mAtaH** refer so? First, by referring to her as the mother of all worlds, **mAtaH samasta jagatAm;** second, by calling her as '**vakShovihAriNi manohara divyamUrte';** this **mAtaH** is the most beautiful One playing nicely on the chest of Lord ViShNu. Who plays on the chest of Lord nArAyaNa other than lakShmI, peria pirATTi? As a mother, her duty is to the children first and then only to her husband and that important sequence is nicely brought our here.

This shloka does not explicitly mention LakShmI who is sitting on the chest of ViShNu; she is rather called out as the mother of all worlds and He is referred to by the name **madhukaiTabhAreH**, the Lord who eradicated the two rAkShasa-s - madhu and kaiTabha. That Lord is none other than Lord HayagrIva. So, this shloka is about shrI mahAlakShmI who is permanently sitting on the chest of Lord HayagrIva.

We are all familiar with dashAvatAra-s, the ten avatAra-s spoken greatly of Lord ViShNu, starting from matysa, kUrma and ending with kalki. One should not assume that those were the only avatAra-s bhagavAn took. He made, is making and will make countless avatAra-s. The word avatAra means 'descending down'. Lord shrIman nArAyaNa who is in parama padam - shrI vaikuNTham, descends to tiruppARkaDal, kShIrAbdhi - milky ocean and lies on the serpent bed called AdisheSha. From there, He descends down into many, many avatAra-s. HayagrIva avatAra is one among them; dashAvatAra-s are cherished by AzhvAr-s and AcArya-s in order to make it easier for common people to remember in a nutshell and pray to them. Ten is an easy number.

Among the infinite avatAra-s of Lord ViShNu, shrI HaygrIva, referred to as **madhu kaiTabhare** in this shloka, is one of the earliest avatAra-s, that precedes even matsya and kUrma avatAra-s. That mUti is called shrI lakShmI HayagrIva. So, the first two lines indicate shrI mahAlakShmI, who is residing permanently and joyfully in the heart of Lord HayagrIva.

She is the mother, IshvarI, for the whole universe, **samsata jagat.** Here, ANNan refers to lakShmI in the same way pUrvAcArya-s have referred **- bhagavatI** as mentioned by yAmunAcArya in catushlokI, **akila jagan mAtaram** by bhagavat rAmAnuja in gadhyam**, samasta loka jananIm** by kUrattAzhvAn and **samasta jananIm vande** by svAmi deshika in dayA shatakam.

This lakShmI is **manohara divyamUrte -** such a beautiful and attractive divine form. **shrIsvAmini shritajanapriya**, it is not only her form - the rUpam - that is beautiful; her actions of making bhagavAn and the children happy, as indicated by "**bhagavan nArAyaNa abhimata anurUpa"** by rAmAnuja in sharaNAgati gadhyam, is also beautiful. She is the mediator between the all powerful Lord, her husband, and all sinful children like us. **dAnashIle**, she is generous beyond any imagination**.** She grants everything and fulfills every wish of those who seek refuge at her lotus feet.

That mahAlakShmI is none other than shrI PadmAvati tAyAr who is the consort of shrI Ve~NkaTesha PerumAL on the 'seven hills'. She is referred to as the sweet companion of the Lord of 'seven hills', **ve~NkaTesha dayite.** That all powerful, so benevolent, pleasing darling of Lord Ve~NkaTesha! **tava suprabhAtam,** let this be an auspicious morning to You. Here is our morning sweet song.

In shrI Ve~NkaTesha suprabhAtam, the word 'suprabhAtam' is first mentioned only in this verse. One should carefully analyze that when referring to the Lord, it says **"uttiShTha". T**hat means - Lord, please get up. But for tAyAr, it says suprabhatam -

sweet greeting song. This concept follows shrI ANDAL's tiruppAvai, where she calls "**nandagOpAlA ezhundirAi,**" but "**yashodAi aRivuRAi**." What nandagOpan can do by getting up, YashodA can accomplish simply by lying down and merely thinking about it, without even getting up. That is the power of shrI mahAlakShmI and that is so nicely brought out in this shloka.

The greetings and awakening of shrI mahA lakShmI continues in the next verse (4) of the shrI Ve~NkaTesha suprabhAtham, composed by PrativAdi Bhayankaram aNNan svAmi.

tava suprabhAtam arvindalocane!
bhavatu prasannamukha candramaNDale !
vidhi sha~Nkarendra vanitAbhiH arcite !
vR^iSha shaila nAtha dayite! dayAnidhE ! ||4||

तव सुप्रभातमरविन्दलोचने भवतु प्रसन्नमुखचन्द्रमण्डले ।
विधिशङ्करेन्द्रवनिताभिरर्चिते वृषशैलनाथदयिते दयानिधे ॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
shrI mahAlakShmI is none other than the beloved consort of the lord of vR^iShashaila, shrI ve~NkaTesha. Her eyes are soft and cool like the petals of lotus flowers; her face is shining like a full moon. She is celebrated with arcana-s (worship) by goddesses sarasvatI, pArvatI and sacI, the wife of great deva-s like brahmA, shiva and indra. She is very kind and is a personification of compassion.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
The adjective "**arvindalocane** -lotus eyed" with which this pirATTi, wife of bhagavAn, is described is very fascinating. That word usually represents only one, lord shrIman nArAyaNa. The supremacy (paratvam) of lord shrIman nArayaNa, that He is above all, is validated from two essential identifiers. First, He has shrI mahA lakShmI seated permanently on His chest and secondly His eyes are described as puNDarIkam, lotus flower. One may recall, Bhagavat rAmAnuja who correctly interpreted the vedic phrase **"kapyAsaM puNDarikam evam akShiNi,"** as lord's eyes are like lotus flower, while his AcArya yAdhavaprakAsha deduced a wrong and absurd meaning. As both bhagavAn and pirATTi are considered as 'midhunam' (inseparable one), what qualifies for the lord also qualifies for the pirATTi too. shrI aNNan brought the 'midhunam' concept in a subtle way by using proper words to describe pirATTi.

Her face is described as a bright and pacifying cool moon. Here, aNNan is contrasting the tirukkalyANa guNa-s (noble characters) of pirATTi from that of bhagavAn. shruti-s (veda-s) claim that lord shrIman nArAyaNa is svatantran; He is totally independent and doesn't have to answer anyone, at any time. The adage, "The buck stops here" fits perfectly for Him. He is the only One who has that power. So, with that power, He punishes people when they commit sins. He is called daNDataran, the judge, jury and the executor. But unlike bhagavAn, pirATTi is the epitome of compassion, as svAmi deshikan says in YatirAja saptati, "anugraha mayIM vande nityam aj~nAta nigrahAm." PirATTi is an embodiment of dayA and never even knows the word called 'punishment'.

PirATTi is not like a scorching and sweltering sun but "**prasannamukha candramaNDale,"** Her tirumukha maNDalam (face) is cheerful and favorably disposed like an enchanting and entrancing moon. She showers her cool blessings on her devotees similar to the serene rays of the moon. In lakShmI tantram, pirATTi describes about herself as, **"sa~NgramymANA bhaktAnAM drAvayAmi ca duShkR^itam"**. I am always on the move and eradicate the sins of the devotees. Like moon, I melt the hearts of the devotees and I dawn like a moon in the hearts of the yogi-s (meditators).

But moon doesn't shine by itself. It reflects the rays of the sun. Just like how moon shines from the sun's light, pirATTi as a pativratA (devoted and virtuous wife), obeys and puts her husband, the bhagavAn, in front. The saying "Behind every great man, there is a woman" starts from her. **ananyA rAghaveNAhaM bhAskareNa prabhA yathA,** says sItA in shrImat vAlmIki rAmAyaNa. She is inseparable from lord rAma like the light which is inseparable from the sun. What we see the light from moon is actually the reflection of the light from the sun. Sun light is hard to take directly, but the moon light is very pleasing.

ParAshara bhaTTar subtly brings out this intricate concept of supremacy of pirATTi but with obedience to her husband, in his shrI guNaratna kosham as, **"svarUpaM svAtantryaM bhagavata idaM candravadane."** He calls out that the lord gets His total independence only because of having pirATTi as the inseparable consort next to Him. In tamizh, there is a proverb, "**aDDikka oru kaiyum aNaikka oru kaiyum**". That is - one hand to punish and one hand to embrace. That simply explains the role of bhagavAn and pirATTi.

The concept of 'midhunam' implies that both lord nArAyaNa and the pirATTi are one AtmA. Both bhagavAn and pirATTi belong to the Ishvara koTi (ultimate supreme lord),

everyone including deva-s bow, kneel and serve them. The wives of great brahmA, shiva and indra - **"vidhi sha~Nkarendra vanitAbhirarcite,"** are no exception. **vidhi** means creator brahmA, **sha~Nkara** is shiva and **indra,** is the king of deva-s and vanitA here means desired wife. vANi, umA, and pulomaja "**arcite**", worship her with words, flowers and other pUjA items. The wives of the highest deva-s are highlighted here to emphasize that every single soul is a sheShan (servant) to bhagavAn and pirATTi.

svAmi ALavandAr, the great yAmunAcAriar, who is a prAcArya (AcArya's AcArya) for bhagavat rAmAnuja, exquisitely describes in his catushlokI, poem composed in praise of shrI mahAlakShmI, **"brahmeshAdi sura vrajaH sadayitas tvaddAsa dAsi gaNaH",** Oh, pirATTi, you are so supreme! The great brahmA, shiva and the whole deva clans with their wives and their belongings are not only servants to you, but they are servants to the servants of yours too. Thus ALavandAr praises the ultimate omnipotence of the tAyAr. aNNan svAmi brought out the same concept in alignment with pUrvAcAryas' elucidation.

It is well-known that the tirumalai hills is in a mountain range with seven peaks representing the seven hoods of Adi sheSha, the inseparable companion servant of lord shrIman nArAyaNa. And so, the divya desham itself is called sheShAcalam. shrInivAsa gadyam enumerates the seven hills as **"sheShAcala garuDAcala vR^iShabhAcala nArAyanAcalAnjanAcalAdi shikharimAlAkulasya"**. The seven hills or peaks are – sheShAdri, garuDAdri, vR^iShabhAdri, nArAyaNAdri, anjanAdri, nIlAdri, and ve~NkatAdri. 'adri' here means mountain. The mahimai, greatness of this tirumalai hills, is widely spoken in two purANa-s – varAha purANa and bhaviShyottara purANa (upa purANa of bhaviShya purANa).

Among those seven hills, in the fourth verse of the shrI Ve~Nkatesha suprabhatam, aNNan svAmi picks vR^iShabhAcala and indicates - "**vR^iSha shaila nAtha dayite",** shrI mahAlakShmI is the inseparable consort of vR^iShabhAcala nAtha. Why vR^iShabhAcala was called out first? One reason could be that this vR^iShabhAdri mountain was the first to be named so in the kR^ita yuga, the first yuga of caturyuga cycle. Lord viShNu had then killed the demon called vR^iShabhAsuran and the asura pleaded to the lord that this hill be named after him and he be granted eternal service to the lord. In practice, vR^iShabhAdri is also the first hill one needs to cross by trekking while climbing up this mountain range.

Finally aNNan praises shrImahA lakShmI as **dayAnidhe** for her dayA (mercy, sympathy and kindness), the highest and foremost quality among all the tirukkalyANa guNa-s (great characters). dayA is synonymous with karuNA (compassion) and vAtsalyam (unmitigated fondness or extreme love). svAmi deshikan has composed dayA satakam

about tiruve~NkaTamuDaiyAn's dayA in more than hundred shloka-s, praising the great quality of compassion. He describes **"shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAm iva rUpiNIm".** One may wonder whether the great quality of vAtsalyam of the lord of seven Hills has taken a form of itself as pirATTi. In his shrIstuti, svAmi deshikan calls, **"kApi kAruNya sImA",** that pirATTi is the endpoint for the noble character called karuNA.

Thus, in the fourth verse here, pirATTi's greatness in terms of omnipotence, supremacy, compassion and pAtivratA dharmam (conduct of dutiful wife) is glorified.

atryAdi saptarishayas samupAsya sandhyAm
AakAsa sindhu kamalAni manoharANi |
AadAya pAdayugam arcayitum prapannA:
sEshAdri sEkhara vibhO! tava suprabhAtam || 5 ||

अत्र्यादिसप्तऋषयस्समुपास्य सन्ध्या-
माकाशसिन्धुकमलानि मनोहराणि ।
आदाय पादयुगमर्चयितुं प्रपन्नाः
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥

After waking up SrI mahAlakshmi, aNNan svAmi in the fifth verse turns back to SrI vEnkatEsan, the Lord of seshAdri and starts praising Him and waking Him up. Every stanza in this prayer is repeated with the phrase "**tava suprabhAtam."** It means, "may it be an auspicious morning to You".

Brief external meaning (anyApadesam)

After completing the nithya karmAs (daily rituals) like morning sandhya vandanam, the saptha rishis (seven sages) like atri, are bringing the beautiful lotus flowers from the ponds nearby Agasa gangA falls. They are ready and waiting here to perform archana to your lotus feet, Lord of SeshAchala! May it be an auspicious morning to You. Please wake up and bless everyone.

Inner meaning (svApadesam):

atryAdi saptarishayas Saptha rishis starting from atri is mentioned here. The seven sages are very renowned for their tapas and occupy an exalted position in vedAs and in other pramANAs (authoritative scriptures). These mAnasa putrAs (mind-born sons)

of the creator god brahmA are the patriarchs of the vedic culture. The batch of these rishis keep changing for every yugA and in the current vaivasuta manvantara (The interval of vaivasuta manu) and kali yugA (the last of the catur yugA), the seven rishis named are atri, brughu, kuthsa, vasishta, gautama, kAsyapa, Angirasa. These seven are mentioned in Krishna Yajur vedA in the Sandhya vandana mantrAs, though the list varies slightly depending upon the source.

The saptha rishis, because of their extreme penance had attained superior yogic power and a very long life span. They are considered even higher than devAs and that is why svAmi aNNan mentions them first among people, in this SrI venkatEsa suprabatham. These rishis "**samupAsya sandhyAm**" have completed morning duties precisely and then only came to wake up the Lord.

Many important things needs to be understood here. 1. Morning duties mentioned here are performing sandhya vandanam, for Brahmin in fact for all trivarNigA males 2. Performing sandhya vandanam is of paramount importance because it is AgyA karma (Lord's commandment); than visiting temple, waking up the Lord, or saying prayers which are anugyA karma (not commanded but recommended). Our AcAryAs make an anlogy jokingly – sandhya vandanam is like regular time work, and going to temple etc. are overtime work. No one will offer you overtime pay without first completing your regular time work. 3. No brAhmaNA, even if he is a maharishi is allowed to skip this trikAla (three times) sandhya vandanam. No one is above the rule; including Lord rAmA who was awakened to perform Sandhya Vandanam, as we saw in the first verse of this suprabatham and mahAbhAratham claims that Lord krIshNA also did it. 4. It has to be performed at prescribed times only, if possible. pramANams claim **SandhyA heenO asuchi: nityam, anarha: sarva karmasu,** that if one fails to perform sandhya vandnanam, he is not clean and not eligible to perform any vedic ritual. Timely performance is also essential.

After completing the morning duties, then these Rishis are bringing "**kamalAni manoharANi,**" sweet fragrant lotus flowers. These flowers are plucked from near the divine falls called "**AakAsa sindhu**" AkAsa ganga. The akAsa ganga theertham (water) orginates from the tirupAdam (holy feet) of the Lord, Sriman nArAyaNA.

SrIsaila pUrnA, commonly known as tirumalai nambi, maternal uncle and one of the five AcAryAs of bhagavad rAmAnujA, used to perform theertha kaimkaryam (service of bringing water) for Lord's tirumanjanam (holy bath) from papavinAsini, a river on tirumala hills. One day, a hunter came across and said that he is thirsty and requested for some water. Tirumlai nambi refused saying that the water in his pot is for the Lord's holy bath and can't be contaminated. Hunter got angry and shot an arrow on

the pot and made a hole. He then drank the water gushing out of the pot and quenched his thirst. The holed pot became empty and Tirumalai nambi was saddened by this incident. He was also nervous on failing his duty of bringing pure water for Lord's tirumanjanam. Watching this, the hunter smilingly shot another arrow on the hills. Nambi was astonished to see water came gushing out through the rocks in the mountain like a huge falls. The hunter asked Tirumalai Nambi from then onwards to use that water for Lord's holy bath. Nambi realized that the hunter was no ordinary man, but was none other than tiruvanegadmudian and was very ecstatic. That water falls is known as AkAsa ganga and water is brought from there even today for Lord's bath.

svAmi nammAzhvAr in his tiruvOimozhi (6.10.2) says, "**sERaar sunaith thaamarai sendhee malarum thiruvENGkadaththaanE,** " oh, ThiruvEnkadavA! Your place, the tirumala hills has wonderful lotus flowers that grow on the ponds; they are like the beautiful lamps lit on top the pond. These ponds are formed from the torrent stream of collected water from the holy falls and blossomed with sweet-scented lotus flowers as described by AzhvAr. With the lotus flower collected from those ponds, the saptha rishis perform meticulous archana "**pAdayugam arcayitum"**.

Lotus flowers mentioned here is just an example. In fact, all fragrant flowers from the pond and nearby garden are collected delicately, and used for the perumAL as were the rishis were doing then. kulasekarAzhvAr pleads to this Lord, "**chenbagamaai nirkkum thiruvudayen aavene,"** to become a sengbaga flower in this divya desam and be honored to become a decorated flower under Lord's lotus feet.

The rishis were named here with an adjective "**prapannA:"** It means that they understood the paramAtma tattvam, jIvAtma tattvam and the relation between those and finally completed a total unconditional saranagati under the lotus feet of Lord SrIman nArAyaNA. That prapatti could be svatantra prapatti (direct request to grant moksham) or anga prapatti (means to complete a part so that they can continue to finish the rest of the bhakthi yogA).

Who is this SrInivAsan? He is "**sEshAdri sEkhara vibhO"** sitting on top of the sehagiri hills like a crown on the mountain range. The rishis earnestly request that Lord to wake up and bless everyone.

pancanana abjabhava shaNmukha vAsavAdhyA:
traivikramAdi caritam vibudhA: stuvanti |

bhAshApati: paThati vAsarasuddhim aarAt
sEshadri sEkhara vibhO! tava suprabhAtam || 6 ||

पञ्चाननाब्जभवषण्मुखवासवाद्याः
त्रैविक्रमादिचरितं विबुधाः स्तुवन्ति ।
भाषापतिः पठति वासरशुद्धिमारात्
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥६॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesam)
The gods, like the five-headed brahmA, six-headed subrahmanyA, ShivA, and Indra are praising your accomplishments when you took avatAram (descended down) as trivikramA. Brhaspati who is the prohit for devAs is reading out the planetary position (Panchangam) of the day. Lord of Seshachala! May it be an auspicious morning to You. Please wake up and bless everyone.

Inner meaning (svApadesam):
After mentioning about how the saptha rishis were ready to perform pushpa kaimkaryam (offering flower archana) in the previous sloka, aNNan svAmi highlights here about other gods who are waiting to pay their dues.

The first one is **Panca Aanana abja bhava,** the five faced brahma who is sitting on top of lotus flower. We have heard about caturmukha brahma everywhere, and one may wonder who this five-faced brahma is? brahma had five faces originally, just like SivA. One day pArvati, the wife of SivA got confused with two five faced gods. So SivA got angry and chopped one of his own father, brahmA's head, so that there will not be any confusion. The story goes like that and the chopped head stuck on to SivA's hand as a skull and he started wandering around as kapAli (beggar with skull as a bowl). This slokA recalls brahma before all those brutal acts have happened.

Next one in line is "**shaNmukha".** It is the six-faced shanmukhA, son of SivA. Then "**vAsavA Adi"** Indra and others are waiting. In most places we hear brahma, SivA and indrA, like nArAyaNa suktam refers, "**sa brahmA sa sivas sEndra sOkshara: paramasvrAt"**. In tiruvoimozhi nammAzhvAr says implicitly "**avanum avanum avanum avanE**"; that is brahma, sivA and indrA are all no one but nArAyaNA. But here in this SrI vEnkatEsa suprabAtham sloka, sivA was not cited directly. Instead he was being replaced with his son shaNmukha. One can also assume the "**Adi**" padham (word), catch-all phrase, can include sivA and all other deities in that list.

vishNu suktam in Rig vedA praises "**yasyOrushu trishu vikramaNEshu adikshiyanti bhuvanAni viSvA pra tatvishNu: sthavatE"**; the one who with his three giant steps enclosed the entire universe, that vishNu is being prayed upon. aNNAn svAmi also parallels that idea here. He says that these gods are coming in the early morning and admiring "**traivikramAdi caritam"** the prabhAvam (superiority, impact) of tiruvikrama avatArA. They are "**stuvanti vibudhA:"** extoling how Lord mahAvishNu took avataram of a tiny vAmanA brahmachAri (bachelor) and grew as a giant across all the universe as Lord tiruvikramA and measured the entire earth with his one foot and the celestial world, the heavens with his another foot.

tiruvikramA avatAram is indicated here first, before Lord's others, most commonly known as dasAvatAram. Of course, the exception being the first sloka, where waking up Lord rAmA which is taken out in verbatim from Srimad vAlmikI rAmAyaNA. Next he mentioned in the third sloka, "**madhu kaidabhArE"** about Lord hayagrivA. In this sixth slokA, Lord triuvikramA is revered by svAmi aNNan.

The name tiruvikramA literally means the conqueror of the three worlds – celestial, earth and underworld. That comprises of seven upper worlds – bhu:, bhuv:, suva:, maha:, jana:, tapa:, sathya; earth in the middle; and seven under worlds – athala , vithala , Suthala, tarAthala , mahAthala , rasAthala , paathaLa. Tiruvikrama avataram is mentioned whenever the supremacy (paratvam) of Lord SrIman nArAyaNA needs to be highlighted. No wonder, AzhvArs and AcAryAs have exalted the enormity of this avatAram in many places.

aNNan svAmi was also very carefully placing "**tiruvikramAti charitram"**, the vaibhavam of Lord tiruvikrama in the same slokA, where he is mentioning about other gods like brahma, shanmukhA and indrA to stress the supremacy of Lord SrIman nArAyaNA and His reign over everything. svAmi desikan in his dEhaLisa stuti says, **"satkurvatAm tava padam chadurAna natvam pAdOdhagam ca SirasA vahatAm Sivatvam**," Oh! Lord tiruvikrama, those who do pUja to your lotus feet are being conferred with the position of brahmA and those who take and sprinkle the holy water washed your lotus feet on their head achieve the position of sivA. That tiruvikraman is here on this seshAcalam as SrInivasan and all the gods and devAs are waiting to wake up and perform ArAdhanA to the Lord.

"**bhAshApati:"** means the one who is the authority on divine and holy speech. For devAs, that is none other than the bruhaspathi, their guru. He "**paThati vAsara suddhim aarAt"** is reciting daily cleansing hymns for purification. This could be performing punyAhavAcanam and other reciting mantrAs to make the whole place pure.

Thus in the 5th and 6th slokAs, saptha rishis and how all the gods are waiting to wake up and wish good morning to the Lord, tirumalaivAsan is described.

IShat praphulla sarasIruha nArikela-
pUga drumAdi sumanohara pAlikAnAm |
AvAti mandam anilaH saha divya gandhaiH
sheShAdri shekhara vibhO! tava suprabhAtam || 7 ||

ईषत्प्रफुल्लसरसीरुहनारिकेल
पूगद्रुमादिसुमनोहरपालिकानाम् ।
आवाति मन्दमनिलस्सह दिव्यगन्धैः
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥७॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
After describing how the the sapta R^iShi-s (seven seers) and other Gods who were waiting to wake up God shrInivAsa, aNNan svAmi describes in this verse how nature itself is welcoming the beautiful day and singing suprabhAtam to the Lord. Lotuses are blooming on top of the lake. Coconut and betel nut trees that are beautifully decorating the edges of the lake are bowing down to the Lord and swaying in the wind gently with fragrances everywhere. Oh, Govinda, the Lord who is residing on top of the sheShAdri hill, salutations to you! May it be auspicious morning to You!

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
shrImahAlakShmI was woken up in the first four verses. Then, in the fifth to sixth verses, Lord shrI ve~NkaTesha was awakened by seers (R^iShi-s) who are nothing but warehouses of knowledge (jn~Anam). Other gods like brahmA, indra et al were welcoming the morning by singing suprabhAtam to this Lord.

Then the author turns attention to the less intelligent living beings like plants, trees and flowers. R^iShi-s waking up the Lord is understandable. We can understand the other gods singing to wake up the Lord also. But how come these semi inanimate things like plant, creeper, leaf, flower, fruit etc. are waking up the Lord when their intelligence is at the lowest level, one may wonder.

nammAzhvAr depicts the resplendent (tejas) beauty (rUpam) of the tirukkuDandai (this divya dehsam is commonly known as Kumbakonam) ArAvamudha AzhvAn in his

tiruvAimozhi pAsuram-s (verses). In the opening verse itself, AzhvAr sings "cIrAr cennel kavari vIsum cezhunIr tirukkuDandai." The Lord resting at tirukkunDandai is so mesmerizing that one would melt away literally by having a glimpse of that Lord, even thinking about him etc. It is not surprising that the human beings lost themselves in this bhagavAn's beauty and noble character (tirukkalyANa guNa-s), inanimate things like rice paddies in the agricultural fields surrounding this place (sthalam) sway gently like a soothing fan (cAmaram) and bring in a gentle breeze for the bhagavAn, as if they are also performing kaimkaryam (service).

aNNan svAmi recalls that tiruvAimozhi here with the same spirit that the betel-nut trees and lotus flowers join together in generating a pleasing fragrance. tirukkuDandai is a flat land with agricultural fields and so rice paddies were described by the AzhvAr. But tirumalai, as the name implies, is a hill station. It is full of rock and water and so betel-nut, lotus and lily which thrive there are described here.

In shrIvaiShNava sampradAyam, three realities (tattva trayam) are emphasized. Easy way to remember them is through the acronym ACE (acetana, cetana and Ishvaran) - inanimate things, individual soul and the super-soul Lord. Trees are considered to be cetana-s with low intelligence whereas piece of wood, metal, table, chair, grains etc. are called acetana-s. Lord who is the master for both cetana and acetana-s, supports, controls and owns (Adheya niyamya svAmitvam) them. The mere existence of the acetana and cetana is to perform or to be used (bhogyam) for the eternal kaimkaryam (service) to the Lord.

When any kaimkaryam is done through manas, vAk, kAyai (mind, words and deed) to the Lord, it should be done without any ego like "I, me and mine". Since the acetana-s do not have intelligence, there is no question of presence of any ego. They can't initiate any kaimkaryam by themselves. Kaimkaryam-s can be done by cetana-s only.
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In the first 6 shloka-s, the author nicely brought the sequence – first saying, all the gods who have special powers (shakti), then the R^iShi-s who mastered the knowledge (jn~Anam) and then the plants, in the descending order of intelligence and ability. But if one carefully analyzes them, it is actually ascending order in terms of selflessness mood (bhAvam). kaimkaryam needs to improve incrementally by losing the ego and achieving towards selflessness. In the same aspect, KulashekarAzhvAr also sings about this Lord shrInivAsa's beauty as **"**paDiyAi kiDandu un pavaLa vAi kANbEnE**"**. Please let me enjoy Your beauty and perform kaimkaryam at the feet of Your devotees (bhAgavata-s), not as a human being, but as a rock, a stepping stone in front of Your temple, utterly void of any ego.

Oh, Lord Govinda, you have manifested on top of the hills called sheShAdri. Please wake up on this beautiful day.

So, in this 7th verse, the author nicely brings about the uttama kaimkaryam (flawless service) performed by low level intelligent things like trees and flowers.

unmIlya netrayugam uttama panjarasthA:
pAtrAvashiShTa kadalI phala pAyasAni |
bhuktvA salIlamatha kelishukAH paThanti
sheShAdri shekhara vibho! tava suprabhAtam || 8 ||

उन्मील्य नेत्रयुगमुत्तमपञ्जरस्थाः
पात्रावशिष्टकदलीफलपायसानि ।
भुक्त्वा सलीलमथ केलिशुकाः पठन्ति
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥८॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
On this beautiful morning, Oh! Lord Govinda, parrots living in their cages open their eyes slowly and look at Your prasAdam-s - sweet pAyasam (rice pudding) mixed with bananas – left over in their bowls. They have already eaten them sumptuously, and happily reciting Your hymns with great enchantment. Lord Govinda, You are the one who have manifested on the peak of sheShAdri hills and our salutations to You.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
After describing how the deva-s (angels), R^iShi-s (seers) and less intelligent lives like trees are serving the Lord and singing the nice hymns, aNNan sVami now turns the attention to parrots.

Parrot is a metaphor, used to indicate a well-disciplined disciple in our tradition. Parrot will repeat what it has been told. Never adds or deducts anything. It is just like a mirror of spoken words. Similarly a devoted disciple will divulge his AcArya's (teacher's) upadesham-s (instructions) without any modifications. svAmi deshika in his shrimadrahaysa traya sAram says, "oru kiLip piLLaikku pazhakki vaittArp pOlE" [I am repeating these traditional ideas of my teachers as if a parrot was trained to repeat].

Parrots eating pAysam with banana is used as a simile to show how a disciple absorbs all the sweet knowledge generously transmitted through his AcArya's teachings and practices.

Here in the shloka, the author brings the scene where the parrots ate all those sweet food, went to sleep and slowly waking up and looking at the left-overs in front of them, start repeating the words learned. In the same fashion, a true disciple pays laser-focused attention to his AcArya's words (shravaNam). He then goes into secluded, digestive mode of meditation (smaraNam and dhyAnam) about what he has learnt. After sometime, he starts teaching others and practices what he has learnt. AtmAvA are draShTavyaH shrotavyaH, mantavyaH nididhyAsitavya, as bR^ihadAraNyaka upaniShad says (After learning the veda-s, with the keen interest to learn the meanings, one listens, contemplates and devotes himself).

The author nicely brings out how a disciple should learn, teach and behave through a simile of parrots. Here is the analogy in a nutshell: parrots = disciple; pAyasam = AcArya's teachings; sleep = meditation; cage = earth; shouting = recitation of hymns.

tantrI prakarSha madhura svanayA vipa~ncyA
gAyati ananta caritaM tava nArado'pi |
bhAShA samagram asakR^it karacAra ramyaM
sheShAdri shekhara vibho! tava suprabhAtam || 9 ||

तन्त्रीप्रकर्षमधुरस्वनया विपञ्च्या
गायत्यनन्तचरितं तव नारदोऽपि ।
भाषासमग्रमसकृत्करचाररम्यं
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥९॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda, we salute you in this early morning! Sage nArada is using his lute so captivatingly and the music is floating in the air. He is singing only about Your hypnotic leelA-s (divine deeds). The details of Your wonderful and playful acts are dispersing in streams in all directions. Oh Lord of the sheShAdri hills, salutations to You in this pious morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):

After describing how deva-s and R^iShi-s worship the Lord, how the trees and wind are bringing nice fragrance, and how the parrots repeat the hymns, aNNan svAmi now turns his attention to deva R^iShi (angelic seer) nArada and how he in turn pays homage to the Lord. After describing the parrot, the disciple in the previous shloka, the greatest teacher nArada is dealt here.

Sage nArada, brainchild of brahmA (brahmA mAnasa putraH) plays important role in many purANa-s, especially in shrimadbhAgavatam and shrimat vAlmIki rAmAyaNam. One might recall the first shloka itself in shrImat vAlmIki rAmAyaNa praises sage nArada as tapo nirata (thoughtful thinker), svAdhyAya nirata (endless studies of scriptures), vAk vidAm (best orator of spirituality) and muni pu~Ngava (sublime seer).

He is renowned for his music and nAma smaraNam "nArAyaNa, nArAyaNa." The name nArada itself means "nAraM dadAti iti nArada," which means the one who generously bestows spiritual knowledge. Sage nArada is described as wanderer over all the three worlds (triloka sa~ncAri) [seven worlds above, earth and seven worlds below], spreading the glory and incredible feats of Lord nArAyaNa (hari leelA) and his avatAram (incarnations).

The Lord of seven hills is called adoringly as "kaliyuga varadan, kalau ve~NkaTa nAyakA" meaning that He showers astonishingly everything to His devotees in this kali yuga (eon). nAma sa~nkIrtanam, singing and praising the Lord is the most significant and easier aspect of bhakti in kali yuga, as iterated by many vedic scripts. As many of us struggle through our lives, "pAtheyaM puNdarikAshaM nAma sa~nkIrtana mUrtam" – singing about the splendor of the Lord is like eating a well-deserved food at the rest stop during our tiring and continuous journey of life.

To emphasize the nAma sa~nkIrtanam to the world, who else other than the great divine Sage nArada would be best fit to spread the Lord's leelAs? So the author describes about nArada and the delightful music emanating from his small vINai (mahati – a type of string instrument) and his ecstatic goal of spreading nArAyaNa nAmam everywhere.

bhR^iNgAvali ca makaranda rasAnu viddha-
jha~NkAragIta ninadaiH saha sevanAya |
niryAti upAnta sarasI kamalodarebhyaH
shESHAdri shekhara vibhO! tava suprabhAtam || 10 ||

भृङ्गावली च मकरन्दरसानुविद्ध
झङ्कारगीतनिनदैस्सह सेवनाय ।
निर्यात्युपान्तसरसीकमलोदरेभ्यः
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१०॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda! The whole swarm of bees which were waiting eagerly the whole night inside the lotus flowers brimming with honey, awaken to welcome this early morning. They come joyfully out of the flowers which are on the edge of the lake, and have started to praise You with the sweet buzzing music; Oh Lord of the sheShAdri hills, salutations to You in this holy morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
After describing how divine sage nArada makes wonderful music with his vINA (plucking instrument) and singing the reverence of the Lord of seven hills, the author aNNan svAmi now describes about the bees praising the Lord.

Sage nArada is a great bhakta (devotee), also a brilliant guru (teacher), and has many celebrated disciples like vyAsa, vAlmIki, prahlAda, dhruva etc. We learn the great teaching techniques of nArada from several purANa-s and especially from shrImat vAlmIki rAmAyaNa, how nArada converts a hunter and a thief called vAlmIki by instructing (upadesham) him about the glory of the Lord.

Here, far less intelligent lives like bees too, magnetized by Sage nArada's music and deep devotion to the Lord, want to outpour their extreme love with whatever facilities that are available to them. They wait patiently throughout the night, just like thousands of bhakta-s (devotees) wait for hours in queues to have the glimpse (darshan) of the Lord only for a few seconds. These swarms of bees make nice ringing sound similar to vedic hymns.

The author's image of bees making the ringing sound in praise of the Lord is similar to the anubhavam (experience) of AzhvAr-s. ANDAL in her tiruppAvai also mentions "pUnkuvaLai pOdil poRi vanDu kaN paDDuppa" – the small bees sit on the stalk of pUnkuvaLai flower and make the ringing sound. KulasehkarAzhvAr in his PerumAL tirumozhi quotes, "tennAvena vaNDinangaL paN pADum vE~NkaTattuL" bees are humming "tennA tenA" musically in tiruve~NkaTam.

Here lotus flower is compared to the Lord. Nectar inside the flower is like veda-s and other pramANa-s (authoritative texts), and the bees which drink them are like uttama bhAgavata-s (ardent devotees) and the humming is like devotees excitedly and loudly crying out “Govinda Govinda Govinda” in the hills of tiruve~NkaTam.

yoShA gaNena vara dadhni vimathyamAne
ghoShAlayeShu dadhi manthana tIvra ghoShAH |
roshAt kaliM vidadhate kakubhashca kumbhAH
sheShAdri shekhara vibho! tava suprabhAtam ||11||

योषागणेन वरदध्नि विमथ्यमाने
घोषालयेषु दधिमन्थनतीव्रघोषाः ।
रोषात्कलिं विदधते ककुभश्च कुम्भाः
शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥११॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda! In this beautiful morning, the cowherd girls are busy with the task of producing the best butter. The rhythmic loud noise of churning the yogurt in their houses is distinctly heard here. The container that holds the yogurt and the shafts that are engaged to churn them are involved in a harmonious contention to produce the supreme quality of butter. Oh Lord of the sheShAdri hills, salutations to You this holy morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
After describing how deva-s, R^iShi-s, sage nArada, humming bees pay homage to the Lord, the author brings in cowherd girls in this shloka.

Since tirumalai is basically a mountain range, it is full of rich grass covering nicely on the slopes everywhere. Cows with their little calves graze on this land and pour down abundant milk. Cowherds who manage these cows get enormous milk and they make yogurt daily. Milk is left with a little yogurt overnight to ferment and form yogurt. The yogurt is then churned in the early morning to extract the butter from them. This task of separation of butter from yogurt is done every morning at each of the

cowherds' homes. The mystical sound from churning at various cowherds' houses, floats in the air and reaches everyone's ears as a delightful orchestrated music.

Churning the yogurt and extracting the butter is a metaphor used in our religion to show bhakti. Just like yogurt is a fermented item, our hearts are filled with dishonest and devious ideas. But, no one can be fully that bad. Within the heart of everyone, in a corner somewhere, there may be a little goodness and spiritual feeling which are like butter hidden inside. The process of continuous deep devotion (bhakti) towards the Lord and His devotees (bhAgavata-s) is like churning and that will lift up the cream of the hidden noble characters in anyone. Not only the righteous characters are exposed, one starts to realize the Lord staying inside. This analogy has been quoted in many of the vedic, AzhvAr-s' and AcArya-s' scripts.

ANDAL in "her tiruppAvai pAsuram says, "Ayciyar mattinAl Osai paDuttina tayir aravam kETTilaiyO". Aren't you listening to the sound of the cowherd girls making noise with the churning shaft?

Yet another way, this simile of churning can be explained as – aShTAkSharam is the yogurt. The shaft (mattu) is the intellect (j~nAnam) and the AcArya-s are the cowherd girls. They churn the mantra and lift out the butter, which is none other than kaimkaryam (service to God). Those AcArya's upadesham-s (teachings) and anuShTAnam-s (practices) are reverberating in the air, during the dawn.

aNNan svAmi illustrates this cowherds' churning to bring out the spiritual feelings inside everyone's heart in the early morning to reach the Lord of seven hills, in this shloka.

padmesha mitra satapatra gatAlivargAH
hartuM shriyaM kuvalayasya nijA~Nga-lakShmyA |
bherI ninAda miva bibhrati tIvranAdam
seShAdri shekhara vibho! tava suprabhAtam || 12||

पद्मेशमित्रशतपत्रगतालिवर्गाः
हर्तुं श्रियं कुवलयस्य निजाङ्गलक्ष्म्या ।
भेरीनिनादमिव बिभ्रति तीव्रनादं

शेषाद्रिशेखरविभो तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१२॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda, You are PadmanAbhan having lotus in Your navel. You are the sustainer of the entire universe. Swarm of bees inside those hundred petal lotuses circle around Your blue-hued body (tirumEni) and have superseded the natural colors of the blue colored lilies. Those bees are buzzing like the sound of the drum and announcing the blue color hued Lord nArAyaNa is arising at this dawn. Oh Lord of the sheShAdri hills, salutations to You this holy morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
After describing the churning of the yogurt by the cowherds (AcArya-s meditate on aShTAkShara) in the previous shloka, aNNAn svAmi immediately turns his attention to the nArAyaNa shabhdam (word) which is the butter frothing out of the churned aShTAkSharam. In this shloka, he enunciates the fundamental reality that Lord shrIman nArAyaNa is the jagat kAraNam (the cause for creation, sustenance and destruction) and the natural color of the Lord's natural body is dark blue (or black).

What is the color of the Lord's body? This is always an intriguing question. In rAmavatAra, it is green, in kR^iShNAvatAra, it is dark blue, and in HayagrIva avatAra, it is pure white. Though, the color may change according to each avatAra, the true color of the Lord is only black or dark blue. That is obvious when one looks at the universe, it is black. Metaphorically, everything in the universe is Lord's body as dictated by sArIraka shAstram (body-soul relation).

svAmi deshikan in his tattva mukta kAlApam says, **"nAbhi nALika ri~NgaNa madhukara paTali datta hasthAvalambham."** The dark colored bees circling for the honey at the lotus found at Lord's navel are so densely populated; the color of the Lord's body itself turned to the color of the bees, which is black. aNNan svAmi uses the same analogy here that the bees which are in dark-blue shade are competing with blue lilies in figuring out whose color better represents the Lord's body. svAmi deshikan uses the analogy of the color of deep YamunA river on a dark night to Lord's body; aNNAn svAmi uses dark-blue lilies here.

By mentioning the lotus coming out of the navel, aNNan reminds that brahmA the creator himself is actually created from that lotus in the navel and subtly pointing out that Lord shrIman nArAyaNa is the cause (kAraNam) and everything else is effect (kAryam).

Thus in the 11th and 12th shloka, the author signifies the essence of aShTAkSharam, that is, Lord Sriman nArAyaNa is the origin (Adi) and everything else is created subsequently, solely by Him, for Him, and from Him.

shrIman abhIShTa varadAkhila loka bandho
shrI shrInivAsa jagadeka dayaika sindho |
shrI devatA grha bhujAntara divya mUrte
shrI ve~NkaTAcala pate tava suprabhAtam ||13||

श्रीमन्नभीष्टवरदाखिललोकबन्धो
श्रीश्रीनिवास जगदेकदयैकसिन्धो ।
श्रीदेवतागृहभुजान्तरदिव्यमूर्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१३॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda, in this beautiful morning the devotees are invoking you! You are the possessor of shrI mahAlakShmI, You are the only final reward, You grant all the wishes of the devotees, and You are ever a dependable friend for the world. Govinda! Oh Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, morning salutations to You on this holy day.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
Last shloka established that the Lord's natural (svAbhAvika) color is black, He is the sustainer of the entire universe and He is PadmanAbhan, the one with lotus on His navel. That undoubtedly confirms Lord Govinda, who is nothing other than shrIman nArAyaNa, is the sole supreme (paratvam).

Lord's yet another important auspicious quality (tirukalyANa guNa) is the easy accessibility (saulabhyam). These two qualities – supremacy and easy accessibility (paratvam and saulabhyam) are needed invariably for the ordinary souls (jIva-s) like us to approach Him and to request the highest reward (puruShArtham), the ultimate bliss (mokSham).

The Lord here is called shrImAn. The word shrI is used in many contexts as a prefix, an adjective to honor something. It is common to see many are called shrImAn from that perspective. But here, He is called as shrI shrInivAsan. The first shrI may reflect

the adjective, but the second shrI indicates that He holds shrI mahAlakShmI inseparably on His chest, forever. Because of Her, the mediator (puruShakArabhUtai), ordinary souls like us who continue to commit countless sins (pApam-s) can even dare to imagine of approaching Him. "shraddhayA devo devatvam ashnute"- veda-s claim Lord Himself gets the nature of divinity only due to His association with shrI mahAlakShmI.

He is abhIShTa varadan - King amongst the boon-givers. Because He is shrInivAsan, having the shrI on with him eternally, He can fulfill all the desires of His devotees. He is called akhila loka bandhu, friend of the entire universe – earth and all the 14 worlds above and below together. svAmi deshikan calls Lord nRsimha as "bandhum akhilasya janto" in kAmAsikAShTakam, conveying the same meaning. Lord is the only relative who is pure, true, selfless and eternal for any creature.

He is the ocean of mercy (dayA sAgaram) and compassion (vAtsalyam). The unique adjective here is "eka" in "jagat eka dayA eka sindho" should be noted. He is the only one in this world with one ocean of mercy and infinite compassion. This eka word (shabdham) eliminates the supremacy of others or supremacy of any other quality other than dayA while granting the wishes. That is because He is shrI shrInivAsan, in association with shrI mahAlakshmi eternally every moment.

In the next line the author ANNan brings out the exact phrase handled by shrI nammAzhvAr describing this shrInivAsan in his prabhandham, tiruvAimozhi (6-10-10) – "agala gillEn iRaiyum enRu alarmEl mangai uRai mArbA." The Lord here has huge arms and shoulders. His heart in between His two powerful shoulders is the seat for shrI mahAlakShmI. The exact place where shrI mahAlakShmI makes her home is explained as – gRha bhujAntara – She makes Lord's chest as her home. And who is this Lord, the one who is having a divine form, divine incarnation – divya mUrte.

Though mahAlakShmI came out of tiruppArkkaDal, milky ocean, she never even visited her birth place after she came to the married home, Lord's chest. Our pUrvAcArya-s lucidly explain that after coming and staying in her husband's chest, even her birth home looked like a cruel thorn to her.

This Lord is not nameless, characterless, and formless as some may like to claim. He has the name shrI shrInivAsan, He has endless noble characters (samasta kalyANa guNAtmakan) and among them the ocean of mercy is the dominant one and He has a beautiful form (rUpam).

In this 13th stanza, vishiShtAdvaitam, shrIvaishNava philosophy is established very lucidly. Briefly, nature, form, character and wealth (svarUpa rUpa, guNa, vibhUti) of bhagavAn are succinctly indicated in this stanza. His svarUpAm is eternally connected with shrI mahAlakShmi, His rUpam is divine and insatiable for devotees, His guNa-s are so vast like an ocean and His wealth is everything in the universe - all the sentient and non-sentient things - which addressed by the phrase akhila loka bandho.

Oh, Lord of Ve~NkaTa mountain, our salutations to you in this early morning. In all these verses it is mentioned ve~NkaTa hills, ve~NkatAcalam. It means ve~NkaTa + acalam. Acalam means staying without any movement. veM kaTayati iti ve~NkataH - All our sins (vem) are burned (kaTayati), scorched, annihilated into ashes. That place, that mountain is staying there forever and without any movement, for the devotees (bhakta-s) to come and worship the Lord.

shrI svAmi puShkariNi kAplava nirmalA~NgAH
shreyorthino hara virinca sanandanAdyAh |
dvAre vasanti vara vetra hatottamA~NgAH
shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||14||

श्रीस्वामिपुष्करिणिकाप्लवनिर्मलाङ्गाः
श्रेयोऽर्थिनो हरविरिञ्चसनन्दनाद्याः ।
द्वारे वसन्ति वरवेत्रहतोत्तमाङ्गाः
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१४॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord of Seven Hills, in this holy morning, people with clean and spotless body are taking a dip in the temple pond. The pond is devotedly called as shrIsvAmi puShkaraNI. Oh, Govinda!, Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala, greetings to You in this holy morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
After describing bhagavAn's nature, form, character and wealth (svarUpa rUpa, guNa, vibhUti) in the last verse, the author addresses the involvement of celestials and others in the worship of this temple.

The first one mentioned who take a dip (Aplava, snAnam) in the holy temple pond (puShkariNI) is, those who have nirmala a~Nga. That is pure, flawless body. That could be deva-s, RShi-s and mahAn-s.

Next line mentions Hara, that is Lord shiva and virinci, that is Lord BrahmA. Then finally sanandana Adi is mentioned. The four kumara-s – sanaka, sanAtana, sanandana, and sanat kumAra are the sages (RShi-s). They are the first mind-born children of Lord BrahmA who followed celibacy and remained as children forever. They always roam around everywhere praising Lord shrI mahAviShNu. In this verse, sanandana Adi means sananadana et al. It refers generally to all the four kumAra-s. Thus all these ultimate devotees also come and take a bath in the temple pond.

Since ancient times, the storage of water in and around the temple was very much of a necessity. Some places are dry and monsoon seasons vary and the need to provide constant water supply for temple purposes - the purification ritual, the rites of concretion etc. - becomes inevitable. Rivers and temple ponds provide that reservoir. That is why we see many cities and temples are situated on the banks of great rivers or close to lakes and ponds.

Here, many powerful and noble souls are talked about. Specifically, deva-s who have pure immaculate body and Lord shiva who is in charge of destruction (samhAram) and Lord BrahmA who is in charge of creation (sRShTi) of the universe and sages sananda kumAra-s, who are the four ever-child RShi-s. When they are so noble, sacred and clean, then what is the necessity for them to take bath in the temple pond? In general, water is a purifying medium. It cleanses all the dirt over the body. But deva-s, shiva and brahmA take a dip not to clean their external body, but to purify their internal organ (indriyam), the mind. Dipping in the sacred river and temple pond removes all the sins (pApam-s) and enhances the merits (puNyam). Temple pond is believed to be connected to Ganges, the holiest river.

For ordinary souls like us, dipping (snAnam) in the temple pond (puShkaraNI) not only removes the external dirt, but also cleanses our mind. Whatever the souls may be, ordinary humans, deva-s or brahmA and shiva all of them have aha~NkAra (“I” ness), mamakAram (“mine” ness) because we all live in the universe of constant birth and death cycle (prakRti maNDalam, samsAram). No one is infallible here on the playful universe (llA vibhUti) and committing mistakes, errors, faults, or misdemeanor charges is common and also unavoidable in many circumstances. So taking a bath in svAmi puShkariNI and the ritual of cleansing becomes somewhat a prerequisite to have the view (darshan) of the Lord.

After the bath, these noble souls approach the entrance of the temple, where the Lord of the Seven Hills, the never separated husband of shrI mahAlakShmI is waiting inside to confer all the rewards. The bhagavAn at this ve~NkaTAcalam is extremely generous and very compassionate, and so He is called kali-yuga varadan, boon-granting Lord of "kali yuga". Kali-yuga is the fourth and final epoch or era of the Hindu cosmology about cycle of ages. Lord shrInivAsa is believed by the devotees to be of most merciful form (parama dayA mUrti) of Lord shrIman nArAyaNa and the fulfiller of every desire requested by any devotee. Not only this Lord is generous, all of His staff is also famous for boon-giving capacity. These deva-s, shiva, brahmA et al are stuck in awe looking at the generosity of the staff of bhagavAn. So, next time if you want a better darshan of the bhagavAn, take a dip in the puShkariNI and then go to the sanctum.

Lord KRShNa in bhagavadgItA in the shloka "udArAH sarva evaite," says the givers are not generous but the receivers are generous and they should be appreciated first. If there is no receiver to be found, then to whom the giver can give or how can he attain the merit (puNyam) or the quality of generosity. That is why this Lord loves when He sees more and more people approach Him with all sorts of wishes. He feels very happy that it is an opportunity to display one of his great qualities, generosity (parama udAratvam).

The author in this verse beautifully points out two words – nirmala a~Nga and uttama a~Nga. Devotees (bhaktha-s) have clean flawless body (nirmala a~Nga) before taking bath, but after the bath at the temple pond, they are elevated to blissful body (uttama a~Nga). This term uttama indirectly reveals the cleanliness happened and the realization that Lord is the superior soul (paramAtmA) and everything else - sentient and non-sentient things (cetana and acetana vastu) - are his body (sharIram) inferring the philosophy of body-soul relation (shArIraka shAstram).

Oh Govinda, Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala, salutations to You in this early morning.

shrI sheShashaila garuDAcala ve~NkaTAdri
nArAyaNAdri vRShabhAdri vRhSAdri mukhyAm |
AkhyAM tvadIya vasate anishaM vadanti
shrI ve~NkaTAcala pate tava suprabhAtam ||15||

श्रीशेषशैल गरुडाचलवेङ्कटाद्रि
नारायणाद्रि वृषभाद्रिवृषाद्रि मुख्याम् ।

आख्यां त्वदीयवसतेरनिशं वदन्ति
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१५॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda, Govinda!, Oh Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, salutations to You this holy morning. On this beautiful morning, your devotees (bhakta-s) are remembering the celebrated hills – sheShAdri hill, garuDAcala hill, ve~NkatAdri hill, nArAyaNAdri hill, vRShabhAdri hill, vRShAdri hill. The devotees sing that You reside here ceaselessly forever.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
The names of seven hills of tirumalai have been quoted differently in different literature. The most commonly referred current names are – vRShabhAdri, a~njanAdri, nIlAdri, garuDAdri, sheShAdri, nArAyaNAdri and ve~NkatAdri. The names mentioned by the author here are slightly different than what we call them today. The bhagavAn here is also called as 'EDukoNDalavADu', the Lord of seven Hills, in Telugu and 'Ezhumalaiyappan', Lord of seven Hills in Tamil.

The seven peaks or hills are believed to be the seven hoods of AdisheSha, and thus the name sheShAcalam. shesSha + acalam. AdisheShan, the first servant of the Lord, majestic snake on which bhagavAn sits, sleeps, uses as pillow, and uses its light under the water etc. is staying here in the form of a mountain, without moving.

svAmi deshikan in the opening verse of his dayAshatakam says, "prapadye taM girim," this servant (dAsan, aDiyEn) surrendering to that tiruve~NkaTa hills. And he assures that this mountain is nothing but frozen form sugar cane juice, which is used as a metaphor for bhagavAn's extreme compassion called dayA which flows like liquid has been frozen at this place (kShetram). It is not the bhagavAn alone, but the mountain itself is so sacred and deshikan makes total unconditional surrender (prapatti - sharaNAgati) to the mountain itself.

KulashekarAzhvAr in his perumAL tirumozhi yearns to be born as a tree, vine or at least a stone lying on this mountain – emperumAn ponmalai mEl EdEnum AvEnE. Tirumangai AzhvAr in his peria tirumozhi begs his mind to go to that tiruve~NkaTa hills – teLLiyAr vaNangum malai tiruvEnkaTAm aDai nenjE. He says the learned people (j~nAni-s), pray only to this mountain. Tirumazhisai AzhvAr in his nAnmugan tiruvandAdi calls for the people to go and pray to the tiruve~NkaTam hills – senru

vaNanguminO sENuyar vEnkaTattai. BhuttatAzhvAr in his second tiruvandAdi declares, that his mind desires only that tiruve~NkaTa hills – vEnkaTamE yAn virumbum veRpu.

svAmi deshika in his Tamil prabhandham adikAra sangraham praises this mountain, "viNNavarum maNNavarum virumbum veda veRpE" – both humans who live on earth and the celestials like deva-s and nityasUri-s who are in mokSham yearns to come to this tiruve~NkaTa hills. Another poet very beautifully stated "mAnDu pirappu ozhindu vaikuntam pukkavarum mINDu tozha kAdalikkum vEnkaTamE" – Liberated souls (mukta-s) are so fortunate ones when they die they go to mokSham without any rebirth on this earth. Even those have the desire so crazy to be born again and pray in this tiruve~NkaTa hills. Such is the glory of this tirumalai.

These outpouring, magnificent messages from AzhvAr-s and AcArya-s about the prominence of this mountain is so fascinating, and so ANNan svAmi, the author, also devotes one verse exclusively to list the various peaks and finally affirms that the Lord ve~NkaTeshwara is residing there eternally.

The moral to be noted here is not just the bhagavAn, but a blade of grass, a creeper, a piece of stone or any other aspect of tirumalai is also extremely sacred. The sacredness is so much that even bhagavat rAmAnuja, the great vishiShTadvaita propagator himself climbed these hills with his knees only and refused to put his feet on the mountain because of the ultimate reverence, because these seven hills are considered to be seven chapters (candos) of the veda-s.

sevA parAH shiva suresha kRshAnu dharma
rakShombunAtha pavamAna dhanAdi nAthAH |
baddhA~njali pravilasan nija shIrSha deshAh
shrI ve~NkaTAcala pate tava suprabhAtam ||16||

सेवापराश्शिवसुरेशकृशानुधर्म
रक्षोऽम्बुनाथ पवमान धनादिनाथाः ।
बद्धाञ्जलि प्रविलसन्निजशीर्ष देशाः
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१६॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):

Oh Govinda! Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, salutations to You this holy morning. Eight guardian angels (aShTa dik pAlaka-s) are serving you by protecting the eight directions – shiva, indra, agni, yama, rAkshasa, varuNa, kubera. They are all standing there with their palms clasped together in a surrender symbol (a~Njali mudra) and with a divine glow on their face. Oh Govinda, Lord of the ve~NkatAcala hills, salutations to you on this beautiful morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):

After describing the place, the holy mountain, now the author concentrates on the deities who safeguard that place and the Lord also. They are called guardian angels (aShTa dik pAlaka-s) AShTa = eight; dik = direction; pAlaka = guardian spirit or ruler. They are also referred sometimes as aShTa dik gaja, dik devata-s and loka pAla-s.

We start from East and go clockwise in all eight directions and name all the angles here.

1. East (prAcI, prAk, pUrvA) Indra - Lord of angels (deva-s) - suresha
2. Southeast (Agneya) – Agni – Lord of fire - kRshAnu
3. South (dakShiNa, avAcI) – yama – Lord of dharma - dharma
4. Southwest (naiRtI) – niruti – raKShasa
5. West(pratIcI, apara, pashcima) – VaruNa – Lord of water - ambhunAtha
6. Northwest (vAyavya) – vAyu – Lord of wind -pavamAna
7. North (uttara udIci)) – kubera Lord of Wealth - dhanAti nAtha
8. Northeast (IshAnya) – IshAna - Lord of destruction - shiva

We have commonly seen the usage of these directions in our daily life also. Northeast corner is usually left empty, because it signifies Ishvara, God of destruction. We prefer north, because it is the direction of Kubera, God of wealth and avoid facing south because it is ruled by yama, Lord of death.

A short phrase in Tamil stacks these eight dig pAlaka-s as - indiranagni yamaniruti varuNan vanda vAyu kuberanIshAnan enna eNdisai ulOkapAlakar." The author here enumerates them as shiva, surehsa, kRshAnu, dharma, rAkShasa, ambhunAtha, pavamAna, dhanAti natha. He also prefixes the list with "sevA parA," indicating these dig pAlaka-s are waiting to perform supreme service. They are standing "baddhA~njalim," with the palms held together as a symbol of plea.

A~njali mudra is a salutation symbol. It is a gesture of reverence, benediction or greeting. MudrA means seal, symbol or sign. It is performed by pressing the two palms and fingers of the hand together while the fingertips pointing upwards. The hands are pressed together gently and evenly. The definition of a~njali is "am jalayati iti

a~njali." It means, melts like water. When one makes this a~njali mudrA in front of the Lord, He melts like water and confers everything.

bhAradwAja samhitA says, "a~njaliH paramA mudrA kshipraM deva prasAdinI" – This a~njali is the supreme gesture and it creates compassion in bhagavAn's heart, very quickly.

These eight angels are basically designated by Lord shrInivAsa to protect from any evil spirits. They are all standing there in front of the temple with their head bowing with reverence, palms in a folded position and waiting for the Lord to command them. **pravilasan nija shIrSha deshAH -** with a~njali mudrA and looking forward to their commander, their heads are all glowing with brightness (tejas).

The definition of service (kai~Nkaryam) itself is kim kurva iti kai~Nkaryam – the attitude of waiting earnestly and enthusiastically and looking forward to what service can we do, what service can we do is called kai~Nkaryam. These pAlaka-s and all others are all looking for the Lord to command them.

PeriyAzhvAr in his periyAzhvAr tirumozhi calls – "uragal uragal uragal… iRavu paDAmal irunda eNmar ulOga pAlIrgAL" – "Hey aShTa dik pAlaka-s you are all bound by the commands of the Lord. Now be careful, bhagavAn is going to rest and you don't make a wink even by mistake, and protect everything."

Thus the author nicely brings out the greatness of the place – ve~NnkatAcala hills in the previous verse and then here shows how the eight guardian angels are protecting every inch of those holy hills and the bhagavAn inside.

dhATIShu te vihaga rAja mRgAdhi rAja
nAgAdhirAja gaja rAja hayAdhirAjAH |
sva svAdhikAra mahimAdhikam arthayante
shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||17||

धाटीषु ते विहगराज मृगाधिराज
नागाधिराज गजराज हयाधिराजाः ।
स्वस्वाधिकार महिमाधिकमर्थयन्ते

श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१७॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):
Oh Lord Govinda! Oh Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, salutations to You in this holy morning! Your transports (vAhana-s) like garuDa (king of birds), lion (king of animals), AdiseshESha (king of snakes), airAvata (king of elephants) and ucchishravas (king of horses) are all seeking your blessings for enhancing their respective impeccable duties to serve you better.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):
After describing in the previous shloka, the eight guardian angels (aShTa digpAlaka-s) who carefully and eagerly shield the Lord in eight different directions, the author prativAdi bhayankaram aNNan svAmi describes about the different modes of transportation for the Lord.

The first conveyance for the Lord mentioned here is vihagarAja. He is garuDa, called the king of birds (pakShirAja). He is reverently called as "vedAtmA vihageshvaro" by svAmi ALavandAr in catusshlOki. garuDa is the embodiment of veda-s. Just like the mirror reflects the image of a person who stands before it, veda-s reflect the true nature of the Lord. And that is the reason why we see garuDa, the primary vehicle for bhagavAn stands in front of Him in the temple altars. Once the digpAlaka-s check and secure the way for safe travel, garuDa carries bhagavAn. Similarly, once the AcArya-s remove all the perverted visions (kudRShTi-s), vEda-s spread majestically in all directions and establishes the supremacy of the Lord.

The next vehicle mentioned here is mRgAdirAja – king of animals. Of course, everyone knows that lion is called the king of animals. Question is - when did the Lord use the lion as the conveyance? We have heard about - half lion half man – nRsimhAvatAra. Though the holy scripts do not talk much about lion as the vehicle for bhagavAn, we always see, enjoy and cherish simha vAhanam (lion vehicle) during utsava-s for the Lord in the temple.

Next vehicle mentioned is nAgAdi rAja, AdisEsha – the royal serpent on which bhagavAn sleeps, sits etc. As AzhvAr describes so lucidly, cenrAl kuDaiyAm – When the Lord walks, AdisheSha goes on top of Him and spreads like an umbrella; irundAl singAsanamAm – when Lord sits, AdisheSha forms himself as a royal throne; ninrAl maravaDiyAm – When Lord stands, he becomes the sandals (pAdukA) etc. AdisheSha - the name itself implies that he is the first and foremost servant of the Lord. Of course, carrying Him as a vehicle is included here, though we have not explicitly seen

or heard that incident. Again, we see during the utsava-s the utsava mUrti being majestically carried on top of sheSha vAhanam (serpent vehicle) and taken in procession.

Next vehicle mentioned is gajarAja, gajendra. shrImat bhAgavatam mesmerizingly talks about gajendra stuti and his last appeal to the Lord to save him from the clutches of the crocodile gripping his leg. Here also, we don't see Lord using the elephant as a vehicle. Lord rAma's walk is described to be as royal as a small elephant walking grandly –'gajena mahatA yantam' in shrImat vAlmIki ramAyaNam. In nacciyAr tirumozhi, ANDAL describes her dreams. There she is seeing the Lord, "vAraNam Ayiram sUzha", the Lord is surrounded by thousand elephants and walking splendidly into the town for wedding ceremony. So, here also we have to assume aNNAn svAmi is describing gaja vAhanam (elephant vehicle) during the utsava mUrti procession.

Next vehicle mentioned is hayAdhirAja. It is hard to name anything as king of horses. Closest we can come up with is ucchaishravas, the flying horse. That name implies long ears and loud neighing. That seven headed horse, pure white in color, was obtained during the churning of the milky ocean (samudra mathana) and is considered to be the vAhana for indra, King of the deva-s (lord of the celestials). Here also we have to resort to utsava mUrti going in procession on ashva vAhana (horse vehicle).

Thus, the author beautifully brings out several animal and bird forms which are used as vAhana-s for the tirumalai shrInivAsa perumAL. One can assume that others could be included here – hamsa vAhana (swan vehicle), hanumanta vAhana (monkey vehicle) etc.

sUryendu bhauma budha vAkpati kAvyasauri
svarbhAnu ketu diviShat pariShat pradhAnAH |
tvat dAsa dAsa caramAvadhi dAsa dAsAH
shrI-ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||18||

सूर्येन्दु भौम बुध वाक्पति काव्यसौरि
स्वर्भानु केतु दिविषत्परिषत्प्रधानाः ।
त्वद्दास दास चरमावधि दासदासाः

श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥१८॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesham):

Oh Lord Govinda, Govinda! Oh Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, salutations to You in this holy morning. The nine planets (navagraha-s) – sUryA (sun), indu (moon), bhauma (mars), budha (mercury), vAkpati (lord of speech, bRhaspati, jupiter), kAvya (shukra, venus), sauri (saturn), swarbhAnu (rAghu), ketu are the leading ones in the assembly of deva-s. They, in reality, are your servant's servants and will remain the same till their end. Those planets are singing the salutations to You.

Inner meaning (svApadesham):

After describing the digpAlaka-s and vAhana-s, the author is talking about the nava graha-s (nine influencers), ultimate planets which are controlling the earth and its inhabitants. The name graha implies seizing, or holding. Each of these planets have an abhimAni devata (controlling demi-gods) and those idols are the ones we commonly see in navagraha sannidhi-s.

When people have problems in their life, it is common for them to consult astrology and perform graha parihAra-s (remedies). For auspicious occasions like wedding, upanayanam, and gRha pravesham etc., they pray for graha phalan and graha shAnti etc. The bottom line is - either for good to happen or to remove the obstacles, these nine devata-s are approached for relief and blessings. Though these graha-s have power, it is only limited, trivial and temporal. These graha-s are like the designated appointees of the King, who do the job as commanded by the King. The Lord shrInivAsa, who is on the tirumalA Hills is the ultimate controller of the entire universe. All the sentient (acetanam, matter) and non-sentient (jIvAtma-s, individual souls) are supported, owned and controlled by Him, and these navagraha-s are no exception.

There are some devotees (bhakta-s) who never even care to look at any other deity, other than shrIman nArAyaNa, even for tiny and transitory rewards (alpha asthira phalan-s). They do not request anything even from this shrInivAsa, who can shower anything and everything. Just like pativratA sthrI (chaste woman), they will be humble and continue their service to the Lord. They are called paramaikAnti-s (worshippers of only one deity without any return). They are the ultimate servants of the Lord. In fact, these nava graha-s are the servants of those ultimate devotees and they will remain like that through their entire lives.

Here the author brings out the great quality called bhAgavata sheShatvam (servitude towards Lord's devotees). It is far superior and has a greater impact in serving the Lord's servants than the Lord Himself. BhagavAn loves His servants more than Himself. We can see these commonly in our world also. Buying a $5 gift for the child would make the father more pleased than buying a $100 gift for the father himself. Similarly, instead of praying to the Lord, these navagraha-s are praying to extreme devotees of the Lord (paramaikAnti-s) just like the King's appointees pleasing the prince, the King's son.

The eminence of ultimate bhAgavata-s are explained in every part of Hindu literature (sanAtana dharma). shrimat bhAgavata purANa get its name by glorifying the importance of the bhAgavata-s. svAmi ALavandAr in his catusshlOki emphasizes the same concept –" brahmeshAdi suravrajaH sadaiyitaH tvat dAsa dAsi gaNaH" - Hey pirATTi, shrI mahA lakShmI, all these deva-s including indra, brahmA and all the celestials with their wives and entire families are actually the servants of your servants.

AzhvAr remarks in divya prabandham, "nAL yenna seyyum kOL yenna seyyum yennappan tAL paRRinARku" – what harm can the stars (nakShatra-s), days (tithi-s) and planets (graha-s) cause to the one who has surrendered firmly at the lotus feet of the Lord shrIman narAyaNa!

svAmi deshikan goes one more step lower from Lord's lotus feet to the sandal (pAdukA) that He is wearing. In kAncana paddhati (22:19) shrI ra~NganAtha pAdukA sahasram (749), svAmi mentions that these nava graha-s are nothing but parts of the Lord's padukA-s (sandals).

kanaka rucirA kAvyA khyAtA shanaiH caraNocitA
shrita guru budhA bhAsvadrUpA dvijAdhipa sevitA |
vihita vibhavA nityaM viShNoH pade maNi pAduke
tvamasi mahatI vishveShAM naH shubhA graha maNDalI ||

In this verse, svAmi describes the beauty of the gemstone studded golden pAdukA with words very smartly that reflect the seven graha-s also, excluding rAhu and ketu. "Hey padukA, your gold luster is of red shade (angAraka, bhauma). You have an important place in rAmAyaNa, the Adi kAvya (shukra). Your moves are slow (saturn revolves slowly), you are being followed by AcArya-s and wise people (guru, budha). You have the shining body (sUrya) and you are being worshipped by the nobles brahmins (candra) and you have established your grand position at the feet of the Lord. These graha-s can provide mixed effects - auspiciousness and hurdles. But

pAdukA, you bless only the highest rewards forever because of your constant connection (nitya sambhandham) with Lord's lotus feet. Here AcArya-s are analogous to the pAdukA-s.

In essence, shrI vaiShNava-s who have completed prapatti (unconditional total surrender at the lotus feet of Lord shrIman narAyaNa), to ward off any ill effects from these planets (navagraha doSha), do not go for navagraha prIti pUjA or graha sAnti homam etc. Instead, they recite the above pAdukA sahasra shloka daily with proper sa~Nkalpam. The inner meaning of this shloka is that for those who are close (AcArya sambhandham), there will be no malefic effects from the nava graha-s. Even those who have not done prapatti, if one can get the rewards easily from the boss, then why is there a need to approach His subordinates?

Thus in this 17th shlokA, svAmi aNNan follows the route of AzhvAr-s and pUrvAcArya-s and is in sync with them by indicating that we have the ultimate Lord shrInivAsa in tirumalA hills, who controls everything, who can mete out negative effects of the nava graha-s and confers all the auspiciousness (ma~NgaLam).

tvat pAda dhULi bharitaH sphuritottamA~NgAH
svargA pavarga nirapekSha nijAntara~NgAH |
kalpA gamA kalanayA kulatAM labhante
shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||19||

त्वत्पादधूलि भरितस्फुरितोत्तमाङ्गाः
स्वर्गापवर्ग निरपेक्ष निजान्तरङ्गाः।
कल्पागमा कलनया कुलतां लभन्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम्॥ ॥१९॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadeshaH):

[**shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate**] Oh Lord Govinda! Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, [**tava suprabhAtam**] salutations to You this holy morning. Oh Lord, Your devotees [**tvat pAda dhULi**] are taking the sacred dust from Your lotus feet and (**bharita)** filling their foreheads; [**sphurita uttamA~NgAH]** and their body is glowing as they are displaying Your full insignia. Being a loyal and an inseparable servant to You makes them (**svarga apavaraga nirapekSha)** indifferent to either svarga (heaven) or mokSha (liberation from birth/death cycle, ultimate bliss) [**nija antar a~ngAH]** in their inner mind (bAhya indriya

– manas). [**kalpa Agama Akalanaya**] As the time passes and numerous eons arrive, they are [**AkulatAm labhante]** confounded by their desire on how to reach You, and engage in an uninterrupted, undiluted, eternal service (kaimkarya-s).

Inner meaning (svApadesha):

This verse and the next one wonderfully bring out the scene where an ordinary human soul is influenced step by step by the Lord's grace and turns out to become an ultimate devotee (bhakta), and crosses the ocean of saMsAra (birth/death cycle).

As trillions of living things are born and die every moment, to be born as a human being by itself, is a very rare gift {durlabhaM mAnuShaM deho} and one should take advantage of the superior sense organs (indriya-s) and mind (manas) blessed to him. Knowledge (j~nAna) is the starting point to recognize and enjoy anything - means (upAya) or rewards (phalan). With the blessings of a human body (mAnuSha sarIra), one can approach a guru (AcArya) and try to learn demystifying the purpose of life on this earth. Understanding how tiny our powers (shakti) are and how limited our knowledge (j~nanam) is, one starts appreciating slowly the grantor, Lord's generosity and compassion. To show gratitude, the human being will try to display himself as a loyal servant and a devotee of the Lord.

The primary symbol on the external body for a vaiShNava (devotee of lord shrInivAsa) is the tirumaN mark on the forehead. In the formal term (vaiShNava paribhASha), it is referred to as tirumaN kAppu (protector). The wearer identifies himself as a devotee (bhakta) of Lord shrIman nArAyaNa and he is guarded by lord's (bhagavAn's) pancAyudha-s (five great holy weapons). As time passes by, the pleased devotee becomes more eager to identify himself as the servant of the Lord. His guru advises him of five cleansing acts (pa~nca saMskAra, samAshrayaNa), a process to initiate him into shrIvaiShNavam. {tApa puNDraH tathA nAmA mantro yAgashca pa~ncamaH}

One of the saMskAra-s is puNDra - wearing 12 tirumAN-s and shrIcUrNa (dvAdasha Urdhva puNDra) on different parts of the upper body by pronouncing various names of Lord shrIman nArAyaNa and shrI mahAlakShmI. The word tirumaN, is actually tiru + maN, which is holy mud. What is this mud? if you ask, it is the dust from the feet of Lord trivikrama who measured the entire universe; it is the white mud that fell down when bhUmi pirATTi (bhU devI) was shivering when Lord mahAvarAha rescued her from the deep ocean and put her on His lap and hugged her; it is the dust from shrI rAmAcandra mUrti's lotus feet which relieved the curse (shApa vimocana) of ahalyA, and it is the same sand on which Lord KR^iShNa fell down, rolled over and played with

His cowherd friends and gopikA-s. The tirumaN and shrIcUrNa are nothing but the dust left over by the lotus feet of the bhagavAn, when he took several vibhava avatAra-s.

By wearing these tirumaN-s, vaiShNava-s are protected by the Lord. So adorned, those devotees are also very delighted to perform service (kaimkarya-s) to bhagavAn and AcArya-s. They are so much enthralled with the peace and happiness blessed by the Lord, despite worldly pleasures and sorrows which are unavoidable and intricately woven into the fabric of saMsAra. For them, heaven (svarga) or liberation (relief from saMsAra) do not make any difference or draw any appeal, because their mind is fixed on to become a true vaiShNava.

As the ages and many births go by, these vaiShNava-s get more and more cleaned up in their spiritual feelings. But the perplexity of constant fall into saMsAra and its own inevitable pitfalls are nudging them to think, how one can be emancipated out of this. Their thirst for relief from birth/death cycle (saMsAra nivAraNa) becomes a single pointed objective and they start seeking help and advice.

Thus in the 19th shlOka, the author aNNAn svAmI, stresses the importance and rewards of wearing tirumaN and shrIcUrNa on their body and leading a happy and peaceful life, for a vaiShNava.

tvadgopurAgrashikharANi nirIkShamANAH
svargApavargapadavIM paramAM shrayantaH |
martyA manuShyabhuvane matimAshrayante
shrIve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||20||

त्वद्गोपुराग्रशिखराणि निरीक्षमाणाः
स्वर्गापवर्गपदवीं परमां श्रयन्तः।
मर्त्या मनुष्यभुवने मतिमाश्रयन्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम्॥ ॥२०॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesha):

[**shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate**] Oh Lord Govinda! Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, [**tava suprabhAtam**] salutations to You in this holy morning.

Oh Lord, on this beautiful day, the devotees (bhakta-s) are [**nirIkShamANAH**] looking reverently at [**tvad-gopura-agra-shikharANi**] the peak of your temple gopura, nicely decorated gateway of Your temple, and realize that it is the entry point for them [**paramAm shrayantaH]** to take ultimate refuge to be granted [**svarga-apavarga-padavIm]** to enjoy high positions in heaven (svarga) or total deliverance from birth/death cycle (mokSha). **[martyA manuShya bhuvane]** The mortal beings on this earth [**matim Ashrayante]** do sharaNAgati (total unconditional surrender) with realization at Your place, where else could they go?

Inner meaning (svApadesha):

In the last verse, author aNNan svAmI lucidly brought out the importance and benefits of wearing Urdhva puNDra and by which he inherently stressed the necessity of pa~nca saMskAra-s. Urdhva puNDra is a synecdoche – simultaneous understanding of the whole – (upalakShaNa) for a greater process. Though the status of vaiShNava (ViShNu devotee) brought a devotee closer to the Lord and made him qualified for Lord's blessings, because of the perils of saMsAra, associated sins and agonizing infinite recurrent births, alas, there was no end!

Etymology for the word "gopura' can be found both in Sanskrit and Tamil. In Sanskrit, the word "gopura" is go + pura. pura means city and "go" has several meanings – cattle, earth, sky, speech etc. "gopura" simply means town gate. It's the gate to the town in sky. In Tamil, the word "gopura" can be separated as "ko" and "pura", which means King's exterior signifying the gateway to the imperishable land. So in essence, the gopura leads to a path of supreme abode.

The purpose of gopura, a monumental tower with ornamented gateway at any temple is somewhat like a beacon. For those who tussle in the high and rough seas and completely lose their direction, beacon is a ray of hope showing them the shore. Similarly, "gopura" with its bright kalasha-s on top is a visual indicator for those who hopelessly muddle through birth/death cycle (saMsAra tApa), encouraging them that relief is easily available for those who seek.

Lord shrInivAsa of ve~NkaTAcala hills rules everything. He is the King of earth and associated worlds (sapta loka-s) and also of the eternal blissful land (mokSha, shrIvaikuNTha). He can grant anything, whatever the devotees wish for. As Lord KR^iShNa says in BhagavadgItA, people approach Him with many, many desires – to acquire new wealth, to recapture lost wealth, acquire knowledge and attain mokSha etc. and Lord blesses them accordingly. Many are under the illusion that wealth, power and glamorous status are the end for all problems. When they become a

VaiShNava and qualify themselves for bhagavAn's kaTAkSha, whatever they attain of worldly possessions, they end in that janma. Even the position of Indra, brahmA and shiva are temporary and are dictated by time clock. Those are not panacea to the end of life cycle, saMsAra.

As AzhvAr-s (Tamil saint poets of very early centuries) and AcArya-s (guru-s) pointed out unilaterally, merits and sins (puNya and pApa) are not the tickets to mokSha. They can provide a better life, a better next birth (janma) or even the position of brahmA; but to go to mokSha, one needs to implement a different means (upAya). It is either through bhakti yoga (deep streamlined continuous devotion), an arduous path or prapatti (unconditional total surrender), an easier path for common people, which is prescribed as "brahma vidyA" in veda-s and other scriptures (shAstra-s). Only through bhakti or prapatti, one can attain nitya vibhUti (eternal world).

nammAzhvAr eulogizes this tiruve~NkaTamuDaiyAn - Lord shrInivAsa and takes shelter under His lotus feet in the pAsuram (musical verse) as "pugal onrillA aDiyEn un aDikIzh amarndu pugundEnE" – I, the lowest person has no other refuge, and thus Lord, I come and surrender at Your lotus feet. Bhagavad-rAmAnuja also says in his shrIbhAShyam, "brammaNi shrInivAse bhavatu mama parasmin shemuShi bhakti rUpA", "Oh, Lord shrinivAsa, who is the absolute supreme, please immerse me in bhakti yoga for me to come to Your abode."

Only in this [**martyA manuShya bhuvane**], mortal world, the means of bhakti and prapatti can be adopted; The deva loka or brahma loka is just a vacation spot. Oh Lord shrInivAsa, You are the supreme God to grant mokSha, and so even deva-s and brahmA have to come down to You and surrender to get mokSha. And thus, the temple gopura distinctly indicates the gateway to mokSha. So even when You are ready to grant anything, [**matim Ashrayante**] the knowledgeable ones who do surrender to You, would seek none other than mokSha, the highest reward that you can bless with. All other rewards, they know it is alpha asthira phala (insignificant temporary rewards). Please note the word "Ashrayante" is repeated twice. sharaNAgati can be done for any objective. First, Ashrayante reflects temporary rewards like svarga and brahma loka (brahma's world). Second, Ashrayante which follows the word "matim" – emphasizes those who are blessed the knowledge (Atma j~nAna) by AcArya-s would aspire only mokSha.

Another poet brings even a higher level of attachment enjoyment with Lord shrInivAsa saying, "mAnDu pirappu ozhindu vaikuntam pukkavarum, mINDu tozhak kAdalikkum vEnkaTamE" – even those who completely ripped apart the birth-death

cycle and reached shrIvaikuntam, parama padam, mokSha, would love to come down and worship this Lord of tiruvE~NkaTa hills.

And thus in these two verses, the author brings out two important processes required for a vaiShNava – pa~nca samskAra which makes a person to be a vaiShNava and prapatti which makes him a shrIvaiShNava. The "shrI" adjective indicates that he is blessed with the wealth of mokSha.

shrI bhUmi nAyaka dayAdi guNAmRtAbdhe
devAdi deva jagadeka sharaNya mUrte |
shrIman ananta garuDAdibhirarcitAnghre
shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||21||

श्रीभूमिनायक दयादिगुणामृताब्धे
देवाधिदेव जगदेकशरण्यमूर्ते ।
श्रीमन्ननन्तगरुडादिभिरर्चिताङ्घ्रे
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥२१॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesha:):

[**shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate**] Oh Lord Govinda! Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, [**tava suprabhAtam**] let it be an auspicious dawn to You this morning. [**shrI bhUmi nAyaka]** Lord of shrI mahAlakShmI and bhUmi pirATTi, [**dayAdi guNAmRtAbdhe]** You are the ocean of compassion (dayA) and other nectar like virtues (tirukkAlyANa guNa-s). [**devAdi deva]** You are the God of all the Gods! [**jagadeka sharaNya mUrte]** You are the embodiment of sole refuge to all the worlds! [**shrIman]** You are the possessor of all the wealth [**ananta garuDAdibhirarcitAnghre]** and Your lotus feet is worshipped by ananta (AdisheSha – divine serpent), garuDa (divine eagle) and others. The devotees are singing glory to You, this morning, Oh Lord Govinda!

Inner meaning (svApadesha):

[**shrI bhUmi nAyaka]** this address is aligned the same way as that in upaniShad-s, which refer the para brahmam as "**hrIshcate lakShmIshca patnyau**," the Lord who is the loving husband of shrI mahAlakShmI and bhUmi pirATTI.

Though bhagavAn has infinite tirukkalyANa guNa-s (virtues), the noblest characteristic called "dayA" (extreme compassion) is referred primarily here, and all the rest are simply extended as Adi (etc.). [**dayAdi]** – means compassion etc. Why is this dayA given so much importance here while other virtues like mAdurya (softness), gAmbhirya (majesty), audArya (generosity) etc. and bhagavAn's shaD guNas (six definitive virtues) like j~nAna, bala etc. which are all equally attractive and very pleasing qualities exist?

In dayA shatakam, svAmi deshika shows the insight about this – **[doShA bhaveyurete yadi nAma daye tvayA vinAbhutA]** - If the Lord of tirumalA hills, shrI

ve~NkaTesha's guNas - jn~Ana, bala, shakti, vIrya, aishvarya, tejas were to be separated from His dayA, then all those six guNa-s will only become doSha-s (defects) and not tirukkalyANa guNa-s. Like an ocean which pleases any number of people who approaches it, this dayA also blesses everyone who surrenders to the Lord. Just as the ocean is huge, deep, and contains many valuable things and pleases everyone, so does this dayA to the devotees of the Lord..

[**devAdi deva]** reflects that Lord is the God for all the gods. Many a times He is referred to as devanAthan, devAdirAjan, deivanAyakan etc. If ordinary deva-s have mystical powers and can grant many boons to their worshippers, imagine the capabilities of their King and His compassion! For all kinds of celestials, this Lord shrInivAsa is the ultimate leader, controller and owner. This line is also in parallel with the upaniShad-s, "**sa brahma sa shiva sa hari sa indra so'kShara parama svarAT**" – He is the Lord of brahmA, shiva and indra. Also nArAyaNa upaniShad says, **nArAyaNAt brahmA jAyate, nArayaNAt rudro jAyate, narAyanat indro jAyate**" – From Lord nArAyaNa came brahmA, shiva and indra. Thus, this Lord Ve~NkaTeshvara is the beginner and King of all Gods.

Next, this Lord is identified with a single phrase which is of utmost importance – **[jagadeka sharaNya].** He is the sole protector; He is the only one who can grant salvation; He is the ultimate bliss to be sought by all. As vibhIShaNa made the desperate call and addressed Lord shrI rAma, "**bhavantaM sarva bhutAnAM sharaNyaM sharaNaM gata:"** – Hey rAghava! You are the sole protector for every living thing and I am surrendering to You. ViShNu purANa also reiterates the same fundamental idea, "**nahi pAlana sAmarthyaM Rte sarveshvarAt hare:"** Other than Hari, the sarveshvaran, no one has the ability to offer protection; also in rAmAyaNa - "**rakshArtaM sarva lokAnAM viShNustvam upajagmivAn.**" To protect all the worlds, hey nArAyaNa, You assumed the role of viShNu. BhagavAn cannot easily give out that rakShakam (protection) without the affectionate recommendation (puruShakAratvam) by pirATTi. That is why for any devotee, protection is always preceded by pirATTi sambandhan and so we see here clearly why **shrI bhUmi nAyaka** precedes **jagadeka sharaNya.**

The word **mUrtaye** explicitly states that this bhagavAn who is always with His consorts shrIdevI and bhUdevI, who is an ocean of mercy, who is worshipped by all the deva-s, who is the refuge for all living things in all of the worlds has a beautiful tirumEni (body). The bhagavAn has tirukkalyANa guNa-s and is not nirguNa brahmam (attributeless God); that bhagavAn has subhAshraya-tirumEni (subham = auspicious, Ashraya = accessible). That Lord ShrInivAsa, who is standing on top of tiruve~NkaTa hills, is easily accessible; He looks so beautiful and pleases everyone. He has

innumerable great virtues. And He is the only one who can offer protection to those who lift their hands and say, “I am doing total unconditional surrender to You”.

This Lord shrInivAsa is being praised by, prayed to and performed kai~Nkaryam (service) by many, many devotees. But here, only two are mentioned prominently - ananta (Adi sheSha) and garuDa (vainateya). These two belong to the category called nityasUri-s (eternals) - they never entered into saMsAra (birth/death cycle) ever. They are always engaged in performing multitude of kaiMkarya-s to Lord shrIman nArAyaNa and his pirATTi-s – shrIdevI, bhUdevI and nILA devI.

Why mention ananta and garuDa only? Because, it shows the exalted level of closeness with the Lord that some jIvAs can get to when blessed by the Lord Himself due to His paratvam (supremacy). In the previous line, the Lord is mentioned as devAdi deva – God of gods. Gods like brahmA, shiva, indra although have some powers, they are still baddha jIva-s – implying that they are bound by karma and birth/death cycle. Other jIvAs such as mukta jIvas (liberated souls) and nityasUri-s (eternals) – who are in elevated state such as shrIvaikuNTham, parama padam, nitya vibhuti on the other hand, are performing eternal kai~Nkarya and enjoying it. Among those who are eternals (nityasUri-s), ananta is first and garuDa is next. By mentioning them, Lord’s unique position of undisputed, uncontested, paratva (supremacy) is depicted. That bhagavAn is none other than Lord shrInivAsa found here in front of us.

Further, the notion of two great qualities of the bhagavAn to offer refuge is mentioned here in the first two lines. First one is supremacy (partvam) - when bhagavAn wants to confer mokSha (liberation) to anyone, absolutely no one can stop, delay or question His decision. And, no one else can offer this mokSha; no one else has the ability or power to grant mokSha. That supremacy is reflected in second line through [**devAdi deva jagadeka sharaNya]** “God of gods”, “unique and singular protector for the entire world”.

Second quality expounded for the bhagavAn is His accessibility (saulabhya). BhagavAn has supreme powers and seem intimidating for anyone to approach Him. By default, bhagavAn acts like a judge and he rewards or punishes all living beings according to their karmA impartially. But, to salvage ourselves, we need to approach Him, despite our immeasurable sins accumulated infinitely from previous births. So, when we are scared to approach Him, we seek the infallible help from pirATTi-s, mainly shrI mahAlakShmI. All the pirATTi-s are capable of puruShakAratva (recommendation) – shrI, bhU, nIlA, godA and pAdukA pirATTi-s. Though bhagavAn is called daNDadhara (punishing authority), through the influential words of shrI and bhU

devi-s, He makes up His mind to forgive the sinners and grant them the eternal price of mokSha due to the sole reason that they have surrendered to Him through pirATTi.

So the first two lines beautifully encourages all living things to surrender to the Lord irrespective of their background and confirms that mokSha is guaranteed because shrI and bhU devI-s will make sure that they influence bhagavAn and make Him forget about or ignore our sins. Next question comes, "What do I get if I surrender to the Lord?" That is answered in the third line – eternal, unshrinking up to the brim, never reducing, never fading service (ananta Ananda kai~Nkarya) and the true ultimate enjoyment of making the Lord happy.

So, in the 21st shloka, the author, aNNan svAmi, brings out the unique thrilling concept of sharaNAgati and its exclusive rewards.

shrI padmanAbha puruShottama vAsudeva
vaikuNTha mAdhava janArdana cakrapANe |
shrIvatsa cihna sharaNAgata pArijAta
shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||22||

श्रीपद्मनाभ पुरुषोत्तम वासुदेव
वैकुण्ठ माधव जनार्दन चक्रपाणे ।
श्रीवत्सचिह्न शरणागतपारिजात
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥२२॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadeshaH):

[**shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate**] Oh Lord Govinda! Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, let it be an auspicious dawn to You this morning. Your devotees are chanting various names of Yours like – [**shrI-padmanAbha, puruShottama, vAsudeva]** shrI padmanAbha (having the lotus in the navel), puruShottama (best among all), vAsudeva (son of vasudeva), vaikuNTha (the supreme being in shrIvaikuNTham), [**mAdhava janArdana cakrapANe]** mAdhava (always with Your consort SrImahAlakshmI, janAradana (one who helps people) and cakrapANi (holding the divine discus shrI sudarshana, on His hand). You are the One having the mark of shrIvatsa (divine mole) on Your Chest in the same place where shrI mahAlakShmI resides and You are the fulfiller of all wishes of those who have surrendered to Your Lotus Feet. The devotees are singing, salutations to

You, Oh Govinda, the Lord of the Ve~NkaTAcala Hill; salutations to You in this Beautiful Dawn of Yours.

Inner meaning (svApadesha):

This verse continues with the sharaNAgati concept outlined in the previous shloka. sharaNAgati guarantees mokSha, as simple as that. Anyone can do this sharaNAgati. It is beyond, age, color, race and monetary or educational qualifications etc. and is very easy to perform. The one who has surrendered already - the prapanna- on his rest of the days here on earth can attain Ananda similar to that of mokSha through nAma sa~NkIrtana of the Lord; recite shloka-s, do bhajans etc. To recite bhagavAn's nAma, most of us are familiar with shrI viShNu sahasranAmam which lists thousands of Lord's nAmA (names). Out of that eight are glorified here as a sample.

The nAma sa~NkIrtanam in this shloka starts with padmanAbha to show that brahmA was born out of this Lord nArAyaNa who is present as shrInivAsa on these hills. He is the oldest. There is nothing called earlier than him. He is called Adi. He alone created the entire universe, by first creating brahmA through His navel. That Lord who is first and creator of everything is of the highest caliber, highest in all aspects. That is reflected by the name puruShottama. He is uttama among all puruSha-s. Otherwise imagine, if the creator Himself has flaws and is imperfect!

The next nAmA refers that He not only creates everything but resides in everything. That is depicted through the nAmA 'vAsudeva'. He resides in everything. vAsu deva can also mean the son of vasudeva, Lord KRShNa. When bhagavAn resides everywhere, that includes mokSha also. It is explicitly mentioned as vaikuNTha in the next name. Here, there, everywhere, He is inseparable from His consort shrI mahAakShmI and that is shown by the nAmA 'mAdhava'.

JanArdana is the next name mentioned here. The word JanArdana has many meanings. We will look at two here that are contrary to each other - one who causes distress to society, and also one who destroys the wicked. The lord causes distress by stealing milk and butter as a child gopAla and as Lord KRShNa nullifies all the asura-s (demons). Cakram, the divine discus, SrI sudarsana mentioned here as a sample from of all the mighty weapons bhagavAn has in his arsenal. In fact, all these weapons are nothing but ornaments. BhagavAn doesn't even need any weapon. His sa~Nkalpa (intention) alone is enough to complete any task.

Last name in the sequence mentioned here is shrIvatsa. shrIvatsam is a mole (maRu) on bhagavAn's chest. svAmi deshika says, "**puruShan maNi varamAga**" in his prabandham. It represents all the living things (individual souls – jIvAtmA-s). BhagavAn keeps His inseparable consort shri mahAlakShmI on His chest. And in the same place where the goddess of wealth, the ultimate recommender (puruShakAra bhUtai) stays, He gave place for all living things to stay.

Finally, the Lord is addressed as [**sharaNAgata pArijAta**]. pAritjAta is the famous wish-fulfiller tree. It is also known as *Kalpa-taru*, and is believed to grant all objects of desire. Lord is known as sharaNAgata parijAta or prapanna pArijAta, one who gives everything to those who have surrendered to Him. svAmi deshikan calls out, "pArijAtam upAsmahe" in paramArtha stuti. He resembles the pArijAta tree and bestows all that His devotees seek from Him.

shrI ViShNu sahasranAma dhyAna shloka says, "**ChAyAyAM pArijAtasya hema siMhAsanopari**" – Lord KRShNa is sitting on a golden throne under the shade of the pArijAta tree. If KRShNa is sitting under, then which is actually the pAritjAta tree? that His great noble character called dayA is; dayA is actually the pArijAta tree. Without bhagavAn's unlimited ocean of mercy (dayA), there is no relief for anyone from saMsAra (birth death cycle). That goes back as a loop to the first line of previous shloka [**dayAdi guNAmRtAbdhe]** where we have started, and completes these two shloka-s about sharaNAgati mahimA (greatness).

Thus in this 22nd shloka, the composer, svAmi aNNan, brings out the delightful list of names for anyone to do nAma samkIrtanam and attain the similar bliss like that of mokSha, here on the earth itself.

kandarpa darpa hara sundara divya mUrte
kAntA kucAmburuha kuTmala lola dRShTe |
kalyANa nirmala guNAkara divya kIrte
shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate tava suprabhAtam ||23||

कन्दर्पदर्पहर सुन्दर दिव्यमूर्ते
कान्ताकुचाम्बुरुह कुड्मल लोलदृष्टे ।
कल्याणनिर्मलगुणाकर दिव्यकीर्ते
श्रीवेङ्कटाचलपते तव सुप्रभातम् ॥२३॥

Brief external meaning (anyApadesha:):

[**shrI ve~NkaTAcalapate**] Oh Lord Govinda! Lord of the ve~NkaTAcala hills, [**tava suprabhAtam**] let it be an auspicious dawn to You this morning. [**sundara divya mUrte]** Oh! Lord, Your devotees (bhakta-s) are all thinking of Your beautiful divine form (tirumEni), which is pure and serene (sAtvic) and extraordinarily beyond common mortal nature (aprAkRitam). [**kandarpa]** Kandarpa is the God of love or cupid, manmatha. Your beauty **[darpa hara]** destroys the pride and arrogance of even that manmatha, who is also called kAma devan. Simply put, even kAma deva is humiliated by Your resplendent beauty. [**kAntA kucAmburuha]** Beautiful womenfolk with their lotus-like bosoms have been engrossed and fascinated by [**kuTmala lola dRShTe] the** mind-crushing glances of Your curved and pure, unblemished eyes. Who might You be! [**kalyANa nirmala guNAkara divya kIrte]** You are THE huge reservoir of abundant auspicious attributes (tirukkalyANa guNa-s), each of which is pure and pristine. Your characteristics are spotless, virtuous and without any stain. Your fame and the divine glory is endless. Salutations to You, Oh Lord, on this beautiful morning.

Inner meaning (svApadesha):

When referring to brahmam, the ultimate Lord, 'savisheSha' brahmam is a more accurate lexicon than 'saguNa' brahmam, which is commonly used to distinguish from 'nirguNa' brahmam postulated by advaiti-s. 'savisheSha' brings out all the four aspects of brahmam – svarUpa, rUpa (vigraha), guNa, and vibhUti (innate nature, personality, quality and extensive wealth), whereas 'saguNa' refers to only one – guNa - among the four important features of brahmam. This concept was alluded to by svAmi Deshikan in 'tattva muktha kalApam' and is of importance here.

In the first line of this verse 23 [**sundara divya mUrte]**, shrI ve~NkaTAcalapati's mesmerizing beauty, 'rUpa' is highlighted. Lord shrInivAsa in Tirumala hills is none other than Lord KRiShNa, as the sthala purANa - shrI

ve~NkaTeshwara mahAtmyam - states. Lord KRiShNa is fondly called as "sAkshAt manmatha manmatha:" - the sole personification of handsomeness, He is Cupid unto Cupid himself.

tAsAm AvirabhUt shauri: smayamAna mukhAmbuja:
pItAmbara dhara: sragvI sAkshAt manmatha manmatha:

shrImad-bhAgavatam (10-32-2) narrates the beauty of Lord KRiShNa thus. The moment when gopikA sthrI-s surrendered completely to their Lord, KRiShNa, He appeared with a divine smile on His lotus face. Wearing a garland of flowers, and a yellow silk garment (pItAmbaram). He was so charming and totally mesmerizing that shrI shukabrahmam describes KRiShNa that He bewildered the mind of manmatha, who himself bewilders the mind of ordinary people.

shrI caitanya mahaprabhu quotes on Lord KRishNa's beauty - sarva citta AkarSha sAkShat manmatha madana. He is a magnet attracting the minds of everyone and even the cupid himself is captivated by the perfect beauty of the Lord. But here, the author Annan svAmi goes one step further and says that manmathan is not only enthralled by the beauty of the Lord, but is ashamed about himself, losing all his ego and wondering why is he still called the angel of beauty! The implication here is that manmatha belongs to the material world (prakRiti maNDalam) and is no match to the Lord who has a spiritual, serene body (aprAkRita tirumEni).

Continuing to describe the effect of bewildering glances of the Lord – girls, gopikA sthrI-s, who themselves are extremely beautiful in and out have completely capitulated in front of Lord KRiShNa. With this, author aNNan implies [**kuTmala lola dRiShTe],** the effect of mind-killing (mind-melting) glances of the Lord on many, many varieties of people – not just beautiful girls but others like devoted bhakta-s, ladies with motherly affection, true companion, inseparable servant etc. Examples of this abound, ranging from dAsa Anjaneya to ultimate mother yashodA; from bhakta prahlAda to shrImahAlakShmI; from poor kucela to warrior king arjuna. It is no wonder that for all the earthly souls, bhagavAn's divine glance (divya kaTAkSham) is the only ultimate means and goal.

Lord ranganAtha is also referred to as the incarnation of shrI KRiShNa, described as "kondal vaNNAnai kovalanAi veNNai uNda vAyan," in amalanAdipirAn by tiruppANAzhvAr. svAmi Deshikan pronounces this glance of Lord shrI ranganatha in bhagavad-dhyAna sopAnam (8).

sAbhiprAya smita vikasitaM cAru bimbAdharoShThaM

duHkhApAya praNayini jane dUra dattAbhi mukhyam |
kAntaM vaktraM kanakAtilaka alamkRitaM rangabhartu:
svAnte gADhaM mama vilagati svAga udAra netram

Oh, Lord ranganAtha, Your lovely pair of lotus-eyes which inherently pour out bountiful pure generosity, beam forth a warm welcome to the worshippers. Why is it mind-killing? Because the Lord already and always knows why we approach Him. His will, intention, compassion, blessings (aruL) starts with the eyes and ends at the lips. Remember the quote – "smile starts from eyes and ends on the lips".

In gopikA gItam, the song of separation in shrimad-bhAgavata purANa (10-31-17), the little girls were singing "prahasitAnanaM prema vIkShaNam" and begging for the smiling face and loving glances of Lord KRiShNa. How do they describe that KRiShNa? rahasi samvidaM hRcchyodayam – KRiShNa is the one who had clandestine and intimate conversations with the gopikA strI-s and their minds were completely swept away by Him; now they are repeatedly bewildered thinking of those moments. They truly felt that Lord is their life and soul. They would die without the compassionate glances of His, and if they do, then the Lord will be solely responsible for their death. They will be killed by just one reason, the mere absence of KRiShNa by their side. What a wonder! How one can be killed without even striking a single weapon.

bhagavAn's compassionate glances (aruL) are the only means (upAyam); and are the only ends (phalan). Here aNNan svAmi brings out the means/goal (upAya/upeya) concept with the analogy of girls with their lotus like bosom. Girls here, refer to all the individual souls (jIvAtmA-s). Everyone other than the Lord is feminine gender. Why? Because no one has an independence (svAtantryam) and all of us depend entirely on the Lord (pArAtantryam) for our existence [strI prAyam itaram jagat]; and we all are servants to the Lord (sheShatvam) naturally (svAbhAvikam). This sheShtava pArAtantryam concept is nailed down in the famous upaniShad vAkyam "kapyAsaM pUNDarikam eva akShiNI." Same idea is brought down here with a metaphor. Just as that lotus flower blooms by looking at the Sun, here golden bosoms, hearts of the young girls blossom by the thought of Lord KRiShNa.

Describing the stunning form (rUpa) of the Lord here, it implicitly denotes His svarUpam as well. Lord KRiShNa declares in bhagavad-gItA, "janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvata". When He descends (avatAra), He comes with the full package without leaving anything – svarUpa, rUpa, guNa, vibhUti. His inherent nature (svarUpa) is that He is unique, single undisputed eternal master, who supports, controls and owns (AdhAra, niyAmyaka, svAmitva) all the individual souls without any

exception at anytime, anywhere or in any form (sarva desha, sarva kAla, sarvAvasthA). UpaniShad-s describe the svarUpam of the brahman as – satyam, jnAnam,anantam, Anandam and amalatvam (real, knowledgeable, infinite, bliss and free from all imperfections). All these attributes are dealt by Annan svAmi in various parts of this stOtra, suprabhAtam.

[**kuTmala lola dRiShTe]** Though the Lord holds such supreme power (paratvam), He is so easily attainable (saulabhyam) through deep devotion (bhakti and prapatti). Having poured out all the blessings to His devotees, He rolls His enchanting eyes as if He is saying, "Who? Me! I don't know anything." The same rolled eyes were the answer to YashodA when she caught Him red handed stealing the butter, as kulasekarAzhvar describes – anji nokkum annokkum (looking in fear and that mischievous glances he gives). Same rolled eyes were the answer to gopikA-s when they were singing in separation (viraha tApam). Same rolled eyes are the answer to devotees who do total unconditional surrender (prapatti) to Him, and the Lord says, "I don't have any more to give to you".

After going through svarUpa and rUpa, the author extols guNa, probably the most enticing aspect of the Lord. [**kalyANa nirmala guNAkara divya kIrte].** Each word of this phrase is very heavy and buried with multitude of meanings. kalyAnam means shubham, mangaLam (auspicious, righteous, bliss). It is the ever-irrefutable qualities of the Lord. Not only are they great, but they are faultless, without any blemish, or blunder. It is not one or two or hundred or even thousands of great qualities. shrI viShNu sahasranAmam lists one thousand names, just as a sample. The qualities of bhagavAn are infinite like an ocean. They are all divine. Their fame is renowned.

kalyAna guNa Akara and **nirmala guNa Akara** are the two key identifiers of the Lord as declared in ubhaya lingAdhikaraNam by vyAsa bhagavAn in brahma sUtra. "nirmala" brings out "akhila heya pratyanIkatvam" meaning "the brahmam is pure, untouched by all the impurities of the universe though He is imminent and present inside and outside of everything. "kalyANa" brings out "ananta kalyANa gunAkaratvam" meaning "The brahmam is infinite with countless divine/auspicious attributes like power, strength, lordship etc." Here, the author aNNan svAmi follows the footsteps of Bhagavat rAmAnujar, who begins his vedArtha sangraham with the same key words in the first shloka itself – nirmalAnanda kalyAna nidhaye viShNave namah:.

svAmi Deshikan in his dayA shatakam calls, "shrinivAsasya karuNamiva rUpinIm" a single quality called dayA (extreme compassion) stands out among all the infinite noble qualities, as if the Lord is made of just dayA itself alone.

[divya kIrte] refers to the divine fame of the Lord. Though His glories can expound from the aspect of svarupa, rUpa or guNa, we would like to explore here along His wealth - that the divine Lord of eternals, unique singular owner of mokSha sAmrAjyam also retains this universe standing here as shrI ve~NkatAcalapati, proving that bhagavAn is 'ubhaya vibhUti nAthan', sole owner of both the universes (nitya vibhUti and lIlA vibhUti). That is the unique distinction Lord shrIman nArAyaNa, who stands here as shrI shrInivAsa, possesses, which no other deva-s or demi-gods may even dare to dispute with.

Thus, bhagavan's four aspects - svarUpa, rUpa, guNa vibhUti - are all brought out delightfully by attributing to Lord shrInivAsa in this verse, with the fortification of the concept, 'savisheSha' brahmam, the lynch pin of vishiShtAdvaitam concept.